

A Comtist Lover

and Other Studies

E. R. CHAPMAN



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A COMTIST LOVER

AND OTHER STUDIES

BY

ELIZABETH RACHEL CHAPMAN

AUTHOR OF "A TOURIST IDYL."

"And, like a man in wrath, the heart
Stood up and answered 'I have felt.'"
In Memoriam.

ERRATUM.

On page 226, line 4, *for* "petrification" *read* "petrification."

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PREFACE.



WORD or two of explanation seems called for with regard to some of these miscellanies.

I have, in the first place, to apologize for a certain repetition of thought, and here and there, of language, in the case of the Third Part of the dialogue on Positivism and the essay called "Immortality-Thoughts." I had not originally intended to include the latter in this volume, but, on reflection, I decided to reprint it here, on account of the—in my view—paramount importance of the topic with which it deals. I have found nothing more surprising among the many occasions for surprise afforded by the vagaries of modern thought than the manner in which this supreme question, Are we, or are we not, immortal? Is there, or is there not, a Hereafter? is quietly shelved by thinkers of all creeds and schools. Orthodox believers, so it seems to me, have never given to what the Germans call "immortality-thoughts" the prominence such thoughts might be

expected to claim from them, while our more "advanced" philosophers behave as though they could have no existence but in the brains of visionaries and sentimentalists. My own conviction is that the problem thus thrust unceremoniously into the background, is no empty speculative one, but one of pressing, vital, and highly practical importance, which will have, sooner or later, to be resolutely faced. I have quoted from Miss Cobbe the expression of her opinion that "before long a much larger share of attention will be given to the subject" (of a future life), "and that it will form in truth the battle-ground for one of the most decisive struggles in the history of the mental progress of our race." In that opinion I entirely concur, and I trust that my deep sense of the gravity of this coming struggle will be accepted as sufficient excuse for any iteration in regard to it.

In this connexion, I may be allowed to express my hope that the "Arguments" to *In Memoriam*, which will be found at the end of this book, may afford some slight help to students of that grand Song of Immortality. They were written with no view to publication—merely as a pleasant daily labour of love, a helpful study, "soothing pain;" but since it has been thought that they might prove acceptable to others, particularly to those mourners, who, while sorely needing the consolation contained in the poem, are incapable of anything like sustained mental effort—they are, with great diffidence, offered especially to the bereaved.

I have divided the five studies forming the bulk of this volume into two parts on chronological grounds. Those included in Part II. belong to an earlier period, and fall naturally into a separate group. Two of them, "Delphine" and "Immortality-Thoughts," were pub-

lished, some years ago, in "Modern Thought." With reference to the third, the paper on Mr. Black's novels, my apologies are due to that distinguished writer for its incompleteness and for the somewhat crude manner in which it presumes—not to criticize—but to praise him. I trust that he may find sufficient justification for its tardy appearance in print in the genuine—I might almost say the reverent enthusiasm inspired by the works of which it treats.

E. R. C.

September, 1886.





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PART I.

A COMTIST LOVER.

“ And since
We needs must hunger,—better for man's love,
Than God's truth ! better, for companions sweet,
Than great convictions ! let us bear our weights,
Preferring dreary hearths to desert sculs.”

AURORA LEIGH.



A COMTIST LOVER;
*BEING A DIALOGUE ON POSITIVISM
AND THE ZEITGEIST.*

The Interlocutors are Augustine and Aimée, betrothed.

SCENE:—*A Flat in South Kensington.*

I.



AIMÉE.—Come in, Austin; I was expecting you. In fact, I have been waiting for you for some time. Ah! I see! You are displeased with me. You have not forgiven me your fortnight's banishment. You thought you would show me that you were in no great hurry to come back. It was hard on you, I admit. To forbid all intercourse—all correspondence, even—for two whole weeks—the step was an unusual one——

Augustine.—An unheard-of one, Aimée, I should say, between lovers—unless, of course, they have quarrelled——

Aim.—And we—we had not quarrelled. . . . But I do not think you have sufficiently allowed for the shock which your revelation gave me a fortnight since. Though I had, as you know, long expected something of the

kind, the announcement that you had definitively joined the Positivists came upon me with the suddenness of—forgive the comparison—of an expected death. (You know death—where we love—is always sudden.) I ought to have been prepared for it; I ought to have seen what was ripening, what had been germinating for years. But, on the other hand, you were very reserved with me on the subject. If I had not pressed you the other day, you would not then have owned the truth.

Aug.—I might possibly have delayed an explanation with you, until I had had time to feel my way a little. There was, perhaps, an instinctive feeling that the avowal of my new faith might disturb the smoothness of our relations, and I did not wish them ruffled, Aimée, by the lightest breeze. But since you yourself precipitated matters, and since you are, after all, a woman of distinguished intellect, and of catholic sympathies, I own I am still at a loss to understand how the “shock,” as you call it, can have been so great as I now begin to perceive that it was. You were, then, very deeply moved? More so than you showed at the time?

Aim.—How deeply I cannot explain to you in a moment. You will understand better in the course of our conversation. But do not think that my resolve not to see you for a fortnight was only the unreasoning impulse of a hurt creature, only a womanish caprice, the offspring of pique and waywardness. I wished for the respite in order to do you justice, Austin. I wished to think over what had passed in the undisturbed quiet of solitary hours, to give my whole mind, my whole time to calm—as far as possible unbiassed consideration of an event of vital importance to us both. And I have done so; I have suspended my writing and all other duties save

such imperative ones as could not be put by, and have done almost nothing since we parted, but study, with all the attention and all the fairness of which I am capable, the works of Comte which you gave me to read—especially the “Catechism of Positive Religion.”

Aug.—I drew your attention particularly to that work as being our manual of instruction, the book we always place in the hands of neophytes and inquirers. But the others, the “General View of Positivism,” especially, do they not teem with interest? I long to hear the impression your course of reading has left on you. The “shock” is lessened, is it not? the pain—if it was pain—is gone? You smile at my impatience, . . . but—*Aimée*, beloved! you smile sadly. . . . Do not keep me in suspense. Surely *you* understand how important it is to me to know that if we cannot think alike on the most momentous of all subjects, some difference of opinion will not be allowed to separate us in spirit? You, whose ideal of love, of marriage, is so lofty, that, until I became acquainted with the Positivist ideal, I had met with nothing comparable to it anywhere—you, who have told me so often that in the “marriage of true minds” there must be—if not identity of opinion, at least sympathy in essentials, at least so much affinity of soul, harmony of spirit, as differentiates human marriage from its analogue among the lower orders of being—you will be the last to wonder at my eagerness for your verdict. I came here full of hope that a fortnight’s reflection would have accomplished in your quicker brain what it took my sluggish one months to evolve; that you would have surmounted those first feelings of surprise and of aloofness; and that, if you could not immediately give your assent to the noble philosophy

and nobler religion which you had been studying (or re-studying, for I believe you were not quite unacquainted with the writings of Comte before)—I should at any rate receive the assurance of your cordial and intelligent sympathy. How happy that would make me, Aimée ! It is all I ask now ; I can wait for the rest. The day will come—I am sure of it—when you will think as I do—when you will give your full adhesion to the Religion of the Future.

Aim.—Not so fast, Austin. One does not uproot the convictions of a lifetime in a moment.

Aug.—Do not smile like that, Aimée ; I have never seen you smile that way before. I swear to you I would rather see you weep. You look so strangely. You make me miserable. . . . I was then utterly deluded ? You have no sympathy for me, no comfort ? I cannot understand it. If you had been a religious bigot, if you had been brought up, as I was myself, after the straightest sect of Puritanism, or if you had not shaken yourself free of the rigid Anglicanism in which you were educated, I should, of course, have expected you to shun me with pious horror. But then we should not have been friends—more than friends. You know that I have always revered in you—not merely your sweetness and goodness of nature, but your clearness of head, the masculine intelligence which you combine with so much womanly grace and tenderness. How is it that *you*—of all women—recoil so strangely from a school of thought which has, at any rate, the merit of discarding superstition, while laying the utmost stress on all those good works in which you are always telling me that pure religion and undefiled consists ? Why, Aimée, can you not see that you are already one of us without knowing it ? In

everything that distinguishes our faith from the moribund creeds around us, in its reasonableness, in its practicalness, in—if I may be allowed the expression—its common sense, in the pre-eminence it awards to morals, in the sovereignty it confers on love, in its purity, its disinterestedness, its burning enthusiasm of humanity; in all this you are at least the equal of the holiest man or woman in our communion; you are more Positivist than Comte himself.

Aim.—It is very possible that there is a sense in which I am Positivist. But then there is also a sense in which I am Buddhist, Mahometan, Catholic. I can admire, I can reverence, I can worship what appears to me to be admirable and worshipful in all the creeds, and in the one which you have adopted there is much which claims my special respect and sympathy. I feel that, within the last fortnight, I have learned from it some lessons of enduring value. And, long ago, before I ever heard the word Positivism, I think it is true that I had some knowledge of the thing. I think it would not be too much to say that, without any guide or influence from without, I groped my way in the dark to the essential truths of Positivism and made them my own.

Aug.—Go on, go on. Tell me which truths they are that draw you to our faith.

Aim.—Ought I not rather to dwell on the tenets that repel me? You were so late in coming, there will scarcely be time—yet, no. I cannot tell you why Positivism makes me shudder, without first showing you that I am not wilfully blind to its merits. Let me name a few of these—in no particular order, but as they occur to me. (You understand, of course, that I do not presume to discuss Positivism *quâ* philosophy, but merely in some

of those religious and social aspects your growing sympathy with which has, you tell me, mainly led to your joining the followers of Comte.) Of course the first thing that strikes and that powerfully attracts in your faith is its altruism; the elevation of the idea of service to a higher place than it has held in any of the orthodox creeds; its repudiation of selfish motive and of petty ideals; its appeal from personal to social feeling as the basis of our commonest actions.

Aug.—To me all this was a revelation, and it has changed my life. To you—oh! I know very well that it was instinctive, like all things else lovely and of good report. Orthodoxy itself could not stifle the need of sacrifice in you. But tell me, have you not felt the necessity of systematizing your best intuitions? Are you able, after a careful investigation of the matter, to resist the claims of an august creed which recognizes, sanctions, and regulates them?

Aim.—We will return to that by and by. Let me go on. Yes, I have been more than ever impressed during the last fortnight by the grandeur of that leading idea of Comte's about the whole of life becoming service, the service of others, of humanity. I was touched—even to tears—but yesterday, by the passage in the "General View" which points out that even personal cleanliness need no longer be a selfish virtue, that even this may come to mean for us a greater fitness for the impersonal life. George Herbert long ago taught the world the magnificent truth that a room may be swept "as to the laws" of God. Auguste Comte has rivalled him in teaching that our lowliest duty to our own bodies may be done as to others and not unto ourselves. That conception transmutes and glorifies existence, and of

itself entitles the religious system which gives it prominence to our special regard.

Aug.—Distinguishing it honourably from the systems in which the only service recognized is that of a vague and dim Divinity, so vague and dim that we end by practically obliterating him altogether, and setting up in his place the only deity of whose existence our singular education has really persuaded us, the idol of Self. But tell me, what other features of our creed impress you favourably?

Aim.—Next I am struck by its reverence for the past. There seems to me to be such an incurable tendency in this brand-new world of ours, this modern world of steam and electricity, of rapid discovery and restless movement, to undervalue the past. Now what Comte is fond of calling the “profoundly relative” character of Positivism remedies this. Positivism sees the good side of its precursors—whether individuals or systems—acknowledges its immense debt to them, finds even in the half-human fetichist something better than the heathen, in his blindness, bowing down to wood and stone, something that prepares the way for a nobler faith. Rebuking us—

“New men, that in the flying of a wheel
Cry down the past,”—

the Positivist does more than learn from it. He takes off his shoes, for he is on holy ground; he falls down and worships. Conscious at once of his greatness as a partaker of the nature of Humanity—the mighty being which has wrought our life into what it is—and awed by his own individual littleness in the face of its incalculable age and of its magnificent achievements; exalted at once and

humbled ; proud and adoring ; the knowledge of what he is, and the hope of what he may be, never wrest his attention from what he has been, never make him oblivious of those who have toiled and agonized and loved and aspired before him.

Aug.—Do not tell me that you will not one day be a Positivist !

Aim.—We are coming to that presently. Will you hear one or two more points in which your faith seems to me to excel many, if not most others ?

Aug.—Will I hear ? I would spend all my life in hearing——

Aim.—You spoke just now of “the pre-eminence it awards to morals,” and of “the sovereignty it confers on love.” Here are two claims on our attention of the utmost magnitude. The extent of the service rendered by any religious system which restores to morals their rightful supremacy, placing them at the apex of human development, and showing how intellect, how industry, how all departments of human energy do but prepare in the wilderness a pathway for the exercise of human goodness, is one which experience only teaches us adequately to appreciate. I know that you can follow me here. You have often told me that goodness, as you understand it now, had no place at all in your early religious education.

Aug.—It has very little place that I can discover in any religion save the religion of Humanity. Of course I do not deny that there are good and even saint-like persons among the adherents of other creeds, but they always appear to me to be good *quand même*, to be good in spite of, not because of, their religious profession. Probably, however, Puritanism the form of

error most familiar to myself, is the worst offender in this particular of them all. The only goodness which it appears to me to recognize is a kind which is really not goodness at all—an impossible, unattainable something made up of dogma, and Bible-reading, and meetings, and tract-giving, and cant—as remote as possible from the actual daily conflict of life, as distinct as possible from the surrender of self, from the throttling of passion, from the obligation to untiring labour for the beautifying and bettering of the world. But, as you say, it is only experience that teaches one this. Oh, the years of weary struggles after the unattainable, after the only ideal set before one, the hopeless, helpless, impracticable ideal of Puritanism ! The boy who is not made up of self-will and conceit imagines the fault to be in himself. He wearies to please those who are set over him, and that inexorable Taskmaster who has, as it were, set him to make bricks without straw, to embrace, on pain of eternal perdition, a set of dogmas that confuse and repel him. He ends by throwing the whole thing overboard and going headlong whither it shall please the world, the flesh, and the devil to lead him.

Aim.—Unless, like Austin, he has a gentle nature, and a power to cling to Duty amid the din of voices and the tumult of falling creeds.

Aug.—If he escape the worst, there is great danger of his being warped intellectually, of his becoming cynical, sceptical, and pessimist. Rudderless, creedless, outcast, and alone, he tosses wearily upon a restless sea of uncertainty, doubt, conjecture—oh, Aimée, I cannot tell you what those years of darkness were to me, nor what it is to me now to have found an anchorage, a faith which appeases the heart while it satisfies the intellect,

fulfilling, as it seems to me, every requirement of our nature !

Aim.—The faith which indeed does this merits indeed the appellation of “the one, the universal religion, to which all other religions bear witness.” I shall show you presently why a patient and unprejudiced study of Positivism has convinced me that it can never do this for me. Let me prove to you first that I *am* unprejudiced, that I can at least appreciate those aspects of Positivism which embody some of the nobler aspirations of our time—of all time. Do not let us hurry. We can resume to-morrow, if time fails to-day.

We were speaking of the ascendancy given in Comte’s system to morals, and of the inefficacy, or at least the failure in practice, of other systems, to maintain morality, goodness, in the forefront of existence. We have agreed that the forms of Christianity with which we are most familiar, such as Roman Catholicism, Anglicanism, Calvinism, fail almost as signally as the primitive religions in this particular, constantly show a tendency to put a something which is not morality where morality ought properly to be. The something is now ritual, now dogma, now devotional exercises, now the mere intellectual acquiescence in some metaphysical abstraction. Morality slips into the second place, the third place. In some cases, notably in that of the distinctively Protestant systems, it is positively looked on with suspicion ! Enthusiasm, we know, is at all times distasteful to mediocrity ; but when it comes to *moral* enthusiasm (viewed from the standpoint of Puritanism),—*moral* enthusiasm is not merely the infirmity of weak-headed visionaries, but is actually criminal ! The teacher who lays stress on “morality” is anathema, and the “moral” man is

regarded as, if anything, rather worse than the reprobate.

In this singular *impasse*, we listen with a sense of immense relief and gratitude to Auguste Comte or any other writer who recalls us to our senses, who shows us that if virtue is not indeed the whole of religion, at least it constitutes nine-tenths of it, and boldly proclaims the self-evident but forgotten truth that the good man is not merely not far from—but actually inhabits—the kingdom of God.

Aug.—I really must interrupt you to show you a curiously appropriate illustration I have in my pocket-book. What do you say to this—from a prominent article in a leading literary organ? I cut it out for you; I knew you would appreciate its significance. The article is on Bacon. “*Like all rigorous religious systems, a rigorous Puritanism hardly concerns itself at all with common morality; although it recognizes the ordinary conceptions of good and evil in worldly matters, it subordinates moral training to purely religious exercises.*” (Your own words.) “No very potent moral convictions could Bacon, therefore, have derived from his mother. Of course, had he frequented as a child a society in which high morality was commonly practised, *there was nothing in his Puritanic training to disable him from benefiting to the full by the example of his environment.*” (Not very high praise, perhaps, for Puritanism! still, I am personally disposed to think that the writer gives it more than its due.) “He was in constant intercourse with his father and his father’s friends, and thence he could only acquire moral insensibility—the insensibility which incapacitated Bacon through life from obtaining a mental grasp of common morality.”

Aim.—As you say, the fact that such assertions as these can be made in cold blood, and as a matter of course, in a quarter which is above suspicion as to vulgar controversial *animus*, is significant indeed. “*Rigorous religious systems hardly concern themselves at all with common morality.*” I am afraid that that is simple matter-of-fact. Nor is it necessary to go very deeply into the science of religion, to examine the religious developments of the past, or to study out-of-the-way forms now existing, in order to confirm it. We need not go beyond those forms with which we are all of us brought in contact every day to verify the tremendous impeachment here put forth, as it were, unconsciously, in the guise of a quite unimpassioned matter-of-course remark. From the orthodox Roman Catholic, buying immunity for a conveniently adjustable code of workaday morality with masses and mummeries, pilgrimages, processions, and confessions, to the inexorable Calvinist, sacrificing to the letter of Scripture—I should say to his own particular rendering of the letter of Scripture—the spirit of justice and holy iconoclasm which, broadly speaking, illumines the pages of the Old Testament, and the spirit of tender humanity, of enthusiastic charity, which, upon the whole, subdues and melts us in the New, it is the same story—theology swamping religion, dogma stifling truth, ritual eclipsing righteousness.

Like you, I pause here to except individuals. Those words of Emerson’s—

“Himself from God he could not free ;
He builded better than he knew ”—

are for ever true of individual believers in all the creeds, of many a dimly-conscious, many a half-unwilling architect of God.

Aug.—Of course they are true, as we are the first to acknowledge. That same unconscious edification, building up, of the glorious structure of Humanity, is one of our cardinal doctrines. Only just now you expressed it beautifully yourself. But think of the architect becoming conscious! Think of his putting his hand to the work, not in semi-darkness, but with a full apprehension of its meaning, not in abject terror, or blind servility, or numbing doubt and bewilderment, but with manful confidence and joyous devotion. No more conflicts of conscience, agonies of casuistry, struggles between the instinctive sense of right and the cramping swaddling-bands of superstition! The whole man in harmony, the whole being in unity—*totus teres atque rotundus*—theory and practice reconciled, the ideal hourly realized, the creed and the life made one! This is what my religion has done for me, and what we confidently expect that in the process of the suns it will do for all mankind. I say again, think of it! Think what this means. Contrast it with the miserable spectacle of the best men and women floundering in measureless sloughs of inconsistency, anomaly, and compromise, bound hand and foot, powerless to redeem their own position from absurdity, or their country's name from dishonour.

Aim.—Ah! there you touch upon an aspect of the question which affects me profoundly, albeit I am personally permitted no share in the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship—nothing save some of the burdens. I am not deemed worthy of a voice in the government of my country, yet I take the liberty of loving her, and when I see her, in the name of civilization, promulgating a petty commercial greed, when I see her, under the ægis of religion, disseminating vices which

would have been unheard of but for her intervention, then I suffer as though I were not too childish to be a citizen, too frivolous to be a patriot.

Aug.—Aimée, do not look so sad.

Aim.—Dear Austin, it is not my own privations that make me so. I was, for the moment, thinking exclusively of my country. On that point I know that we are agreed. You feel with me, that bad as are the effects upon individual character of the common severance between religion and goodness, the results upon national character are worse, or at any rate more painfully evident. When we are acting *en masse*, as a people, then the fatal defects of actual religious systems appear in their true light.

Aug.—It is indeed singular how, in reading history, with a view to the connection, or, I should say, to the separation between so-called religion and morals, that truth stares one in the face upon every page, "*Rigorous religious systems hardly concern themselves at all with common morality.*" Take that one salient instance of our national sanction during so long a period of the unspeakable horrors of the slave trade! Picture to yourself that it is not eighty years, since, after a protracted struggle, and with enormous difficulty, that burning national shame was done away! Reflect that, within a century or so, the descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers, who, *in the name of religion*, mind you, had colonized America, were advertising in their newspapers, along with horses and cows, "*likely negro wenches*" and "*likely negro boys!*" Think that while these things were doing, Wesley's "religious" revival was agitating England from end to end! Think of all the preaching, and the church-going, and the chapel-building that were going forward—and public morality all

the while exemplified by the iniquities of the plantations and the devilries of the middle passage.

Aim.—And as it was then, so, in a degree, it is now. Perhaps I ought hardly to say “in a degree,” for although I believe it to be true, on the whole, that we have, as a nation, reached a higher moral level than the one which we occupied in those days, still there are times when one is inclined to seriously question whether there has been any progress at all. There are recent facts, contemporary facts in our national records, which fill one with a sickening sense of shame and humiliation, a shame and a humiliation that would be far easier to bear if we were not called a religious people, if our Parliamentary sessions did not open with prayer, and our men-of-war did not carry chaplains, if we ceased to subsidize missions and refrained from sowing broad-cast throughout the world that “lesson-book of righteousness” to whose teachings our conduct, political, social, and commercial, gives the lie. I, also, will take but one example—our Indian opium trade. I will not speak of our slow murder of subject native races by means of the drink-poison; of shameful liquor-treaties forced upon other countries, such as Madagascar and Siam; of our acquiescence in, if not direct promotion of, drunkenness among sober Mahometan populations like that, for instance, of Zanzibar, where we permit a foul drug known as German brandy to be sold under our ægis, in the teeth of the one prohibition which does honour to the faith of Mahomet and to the rule of the Sultan. I pass over the governmental sanction afforded in some of our colonies to worse infamies still. I will dwell only on that single specimen of our national morality, our national religion—the Indo-Chinese opium traffic. To me the reflection that we are

daily spreading disease, demoralization, and decay among a people for the most part harmless, industrious, frugal, and clean-living, is simply appalling. In some districts of China, we are told, the inhabitants are so gentle and so virtuous that our missionaries find great difficulty in reconciling their existence with the doctrine of original sin, and, in fact, can by no means fit them into the cut-and-dried scheme with which they went forth equipped for the fray. I would cast no slur upon these enthusiasts—good men, many of them, who doubtless embarked on their enterprise in the strength of honest conviction, and of genuine self-devotion—but I would have had their eyes enlightened that they might see. I would have had it pointed out to them that their first duty was to raise throughout their own country such a storm of indignation against the source from which a considerable portion of our Indian revenue is derived, as would enable them to enter China unashamed and unshackled by the stigma attached to their nation in the eyes of intelligent heathendom.

Aug.—I was speaking somewhat in this strain the other day to an Anglo-Indian official of some distinction. He looked at me with all the contempt of Red tape-ism for the "*doctrinaire*" reformer. "I think you hardly know what an exceedingly complicated question you are raising," he observed, with a mixture of patronage and irritation. "Without being an expert," I replied, "I can conceive that the question may bristle with difficulty. Until, however, a solution is found, I would merely propose that we should withdraw our missionaries from China. If, as a nation, we cannot choose but act viciously, at least we might avoid making ourselves ridiculous by ceasing to act hypocritically."

But we are wandering away from Positivism.

Aim.—Scarcely. We have not been wasting time in dwelling upon the practical results both upon individuals and upon nations of religious theories which do not give the first place to morals. Under a system like that of Positivism such anomalies would be unheard of. That was our starting-point. Positivism, by subjugating self-love, in every department of life, to social feeling, by making moral progress the supreme aspiration of every citizen, by refusing to recognize any ideal short of absolute moral perfection, and by applying to international morality the same standards by which it regulates personal conduct, would, were it paramount, render such solecisms as we see every day perpetrated by “Christian” governments, impossible.

Aug.—And will do so——.

Aim.—I will tell you by and by why I fear that it will not. Let me now praise Positivism for perhaps its noblest title to our respect, for probably the grandest of all its doctrines (since altruism itself springs from and is implied in this), for the “sovereignty it confers on Love.” It is a very significant thing, and a very beautiful thing, that now, in the old age of the world, an eminent philosopher—yes, I do presume to call your “grotesque French pedant” an eminent philosopher—should have dared to inscribe upon the threshold of his system the words, “*Love our principle.*” For an aging world, like an aging man or woman, tends to become a little disdainful of the claims of love, a little jealous of the extremely large share which love has in the ideal human life. Maturity with races, as with individuals, is often synonymous with materialism; or, failing that, failing the gradual settling-down into ignoble ease—mere content

with outward prosperity and animal comfort—the mind falls into the opposite extreme. Instead of becoming over-animalized it becomes over-intellectualized. Instead of the tendency (much goods having been laid up for many years) to batten in selfish luxury, there is the tendency to sit down, with equal gusto, to a purely intellectual banquet, to surfeit the mental faculties, and to magnify knowledge, until it actually overspreads the whole horizon. The claims of—shall I call it soul with the orthodox? emotion, feeling with Comte? “*Herz, Liebe, Gott*,” with Goethe? I care not—the claims of that which is most distinctively human, and, I dare to say it, most assuredly divine in us—are gradually shelved. Love is regarded as the prerogative of youth, and it is only in our twenties that (if we listen to most philosophers) our *Vita Nuovas* may be said or sung.

Aug.—I suppose that this last attitude of mind is especially characteristic of the eighteenth century. The climax of this over-intellectualization—of barren, fruitless, metaphysical speculation, as we should say—would seem to have been reached in the era of Voltaire and the Encyclopædists. Our master never tired of denouncing their bald negations, their empty, profitless, irreligious cobweb-spinning.

Aim.—I am afraid that Comte’s thunderbolts did not exterminate the species. Philosophers are now intoxicated with science, as they were then intoxicated with free-thought. There are men living now who have forgotten the claims of soul as completely as the most thorough-going Voltairean of them all, who imagine that man can live by knowledge alone, who implicitly, if not openly, dispute the title of love to the sovereignty of the universe. Do you remember what Helps says somewhere

about love? He says that what Shelley makes Apollo exclaim, love might well say too—

“I am the eye with which the universe
Beholds itself and knows itself divine ;
All harmony of instrument or verse,
All prophecy, all medicine are mine,
All light of art or nature—to my song
Victory and praise in their own right belong.”

That is not too much to say about love. It is no poetic exaggeration on Helps's part to call love “the eye with which the universe beholds itself and knows itself divine.” There is no other faculty by which it can cease to regard itself as devilish. Material improvements, unconsecrated by a widening humanity, are but engines of Satan; intellectual advances, unmellowed by deepening sympathies, are worse than valueless. If we may be allowed roughly to divide the complex requirements of human nature into needs of the flesh, needs of the intelligence, and needs of the heart, then it is indisputable that these last needs are more imperative than either of the others, and can only be elbowed out on pain of reducing men and women to pure animals, or, what is nearly as bad, to pure intellects.

Love redeems the misfortune of birth, and blesses, with compensating sweetness, that period of life when regret is most poignant, neglect most desolating, injustice most intolerable, and unkindness most heart-breaking—the period of childhood. It softens to the young man and the girl the shock of the first contact with a world where enthusiasm is ridiculed and earnestness disliked, a world which professes to worship Jesus Christ, or, at the least, to respect what is good, and which really worships

Mammon, and respects nothing so much as a lord. Love only preserves the tempted, and equips the weak, and brings home the prodigal with joyful munificence of forgiveness and that unstinted oblivion which alone can exorcise the dismay and the discouragement of sin. In marriage—true human marriage—Love stands forth, crowned and mitred at last as king and priest of the whole life, chastening passion, ennobling self-surrender, typifying in the sacramental beauty of the supreme human tie every other and lesser avatar of Love on the earth. Then, in middle age, the stubbornness of the powers of evil, and the vampire-claims of the world, and the weariness of routine, and the inroads of materialism, and the enticements of mere knowing, and the assaults of cynicism—all these are held at bay by Love, and Love only, and the heart is kept young with his perpetual youth, and buoyant with the might of his presence. In the end—in age—in death—Love triumphs gloriously, cancelling the failure that would else mean ruin, and the parting that without him would be despair—himself the warrant of his own godhead, himself the pledge of his own immortality. . . .

Comte has put it all into one beautiful line, where he says that, under Positivism, "Life, whether private or public, becomes a continuous act of worship, performed under the inspiration of universal Love."

Before passing from this subject, I should like to say one word as to the Positivist view of marriage—marriage, the type, as I called it, of that great principle of universal Love "on which the whole Positive doctrine is based." You remarked just now that, until you came in contact with Positivism, you had met with no ideal of marriage that in any way satisfied you. I have found the same.

Upon the whole, and apart from one or two curious slips into older and less elevated modes of thought, I have found Comte's views upon the subject strikingly noble, sound, and far-sighted. I do not think that Comte arrogates too much when he speaks of "the general advance of this admirable institution, the primary basis of all human order, . . . from the primal polygamy *down to the Positivist marriage.*" It seems to me that his system is the first which explicitly states the primary, the especial object of marriage to be "*the mutual perfecting of the two sexes,*" the first which lays it down that "the regeneration of family life depends on the constituting, on an altruistic basis, human marriage, which has hitherto been made to rest on a purely egoistic principle."

Aug.—I knew well that you could not fail to do justice to one of the sublimest articles of our faith. Not only do we revere marriage as the "primary basis of all human order" (a matter in itself of no slight consequence in these days of attacks upon marriage, even in quarters where it would have been thought secure), but it has certainly been given a place in the Religion of Humanity which no previous religion accorded to it. Catholicism, we know, looked askance at it; theologism generally has only tolerated it; so that it could never shake itself free of low ideals, nor definitively assert its claim to be—not merely permissible—but in very deed a magnificent, holy, and religious sacrament. Probably the highest expression of the old view of marriage is to be found in the Church of England marriage service, a service the greater portion of which makes us wince, not because it is outspoken, but because it is untrue, and which, I will venture to say, will not compare for an instant with those passages of

Comte's writings in which he describes, in all its aspects, true human marriage.

Aim.—One aspect of it, upon which he lays great stress, is peculiarly consonant with what has ever been my own feeling—I mean the indissolubility of marriage. I entirely hold with him that there are scarcely any conceivable circumstances under which the marriage-tie should be dissolved by law. I would go further still, and say no circumstances at all.

Aug.—You would not even admit his exceptional case, the condemnation of one or other of the parties to any degrading punishment which carries with it social death?

Aim.—I cannot see why this calamity also should not be submitted to by the individual, “first in the interest of the general order, then as a just consequence of his original mistake.” Does it not strike you that instead of bestowing the infinite pains we do at present on facilitating the cancelling of these “original mistakes,” it might be as well to take a little more trouble to prevent their being made?

Aug.—You mean by educating the popular view of marriage to something approaching the true view, especially by reviving true courtship—I should say by creating it—as distinguished from what Ruskin calls mob-courtship, whereby young people “are continually in danger of losing all the honour of life for a folly, and all the joy of it for an accident.”

Aim.—The domain is too completely unexplored, the subject too vast, to enter upon now in detail. We must content ourselves, for the present, with the general remark that here, as in other reforms, a little more *doing* and a little less *undoing* would be of infinite value. Of course the individual will suffer in the process, but this would

seem to be an invariable sociological law. His posterity will benefit by it, and he must learn altruism enough to endure hardness in "the interest of the general order."

Then there is that "holy law of eternal widowhood, by which Positivism at length completes the great institution of marriage." As far as I know, we are indebted to Comte alone, among the founders of religions, for this grand conception, for the extension beyond the grave of the doctrine of the indissolubility of marriage. For my own part I have always felt that our boasted monogamy was singularly imperfect, while we permitted that "subjective polygamy" (or polyandry, as the case may be) which is involved in the practice of second marriages.

Aug.—I, too, have chafed under the practice all my life, and when I first met with the law of eternal widowhood in Comte's writings, I immediately felt that strong inward response which implies years of silent revolt against an ignoble convention. Of course, I acknowledge all the practical difficulties, and I admit that the average man and woman, as at present constituted, will not be very easily brought to embrace a doctrine which is based on the supremacy of spirit and on the royalty of love, but I shall never cease to be thankful for the glorious ideal, clearly formulated at last by my revered master, and inculcated as a leading principle by our religion.

Aim.—Exactly. It is the *principle* one needs, the conception, the ideal. If people would but see that! If they would but see that those practical details, over which they fuss and fret and fume, right themselves of their own accord, once the mind is imbued with a great idea, or the heart with an intense desire. Establish a principle, promulgate a conception, lift up an ideal, and it will follow

as the night the day that it will embody itself in practice. Oh, you may have to *wait*—generations, centuries perhaps! But you will have set the heaven at work; you will have begun—not *unpractically*, as dull fools suppose, who cannot see the forest for the trees—but emphatically at the right end.

I see our talk is lasting longer than I thought. We shall have to finish to-morrow. I have to be at the Infirmary before dark to fetch that baby.

Aug.—What baby?

Aim.—A sweet little girl, absolutely friendless, that some childless friends of mine, an oil-and-colourman and his wife, are going to adopt. I have to house her for a few days. Come again to-morrow—that is, if you don't mind my pauper baby. I shall have to rock her cradle with my foot, probably, while we are talking, and it is quite possible that she may cry.

Aug.—She may cry her heart out if you will smile as you are smiling now—for the first time to-day——

Aim.—Ah, I fear that I shall not smile much to-morrow.

Aug.—Then I shall be miserable until to-morrow. Are you inexorable? Must we really break off here?

Aim.—If there is a kind of appointment that I am jealous of keeping religiously, it is this kind. A duchess could wait probably—but a pauper baby——

That reminds me, Austin, there is one thing more, one other lesson of the utmost value that is inculcated by your religion—I mean our duty to inferiors. I have been accustomed to think, with regard to servants, and indeed all those whose daily labour makes our daily life possible to us, that true service cannot be recompensed in money *alone*. Comte delightfully says—and it is one of the

strongest points in all his teaching—that it cannot be recompensed in money *at all*. The labour of man, he says, that is, “the useful effort of man to re-act against his destiny, cannot be other than gratuitous, because it does not admit of nor require any payment in the strict sense.” Again, “no individual service ever admits of other reward than the satisfaction of rendering it and the gratitude it excites.” I too “have often been shocked at the prevailing egoism, which, on the strength of a very small salary, acquits us of all gratitude for important and difficult services,” but I never grasped till now the full import of the “holy transformation” by means of which the idea of payment is eliminated altogether.

Aug.—That is not unnatural. One must become deeply imbued with the spirit of Positivism, with the sense of one's real participation and that of all others in the common work—the service and regeneration of Humanity—in order to apprehend its meaning. Here again the “practical” application is, of course, a crux to the vulgar. But I agree with you in caring not one fig for the practical application. The conception is entirely true, noble, and beautiful. That is enough for me. Time will do the rest, and the spread of education—on our principles.

* * * * *

I am really to go then? . . . Great heavens, Aimée! what has happened? Am I not to be allowed to touch your hand? . . .

II.

Aim.—Shut the door gently, Austin. My baby is asleep. Does she not look well in my ancestral carved cradle? Oh, we shall not disturb her—that is, if you can listen patiently to what I have to say.

Aug.—I can bear anything—if you will but look as you used to do. I have no wish to utter a word, and you may whisper. Only tell me—in common humanity—tell me what it all means. I heard from you yesterday a more eloquent eulogy of some of the main theses of the religion I have made my own than I have been accustomed to hear from Positivists themselves. Yet, while you spoke—nay, before you spoke—I saw that an immense change had come over you. Indeed, you gave me to understand pretty plainly that our relation was altered. I am mystified, and miserable. I need not tell you that I have not slept. Speak to me. Tell me why it is that you can recognize—nay, enthusiastically admire—all that makes Positivism admirable, and yet behave as though you would cast me off for having embraced it?

Aim.—Let me begin by telling you that I too did not sleep last night. I spent the night turning this thing over in my thoughts, trying to think how I could best frame that indictment against Positivism which we had to postpone until to-day, spending yesterday in praise. I have come to the conclusion that the best way will be to single out three objections that appear to me to be in themselves, and apart from other charges which, were we treating the subject exhaustively, might have to be dealt with, sufficient to dismiss the tremendous claim which the Religion of Humanity puts forth—that, namely,

of being "the one, the universal religion, to which all other religions bear witness."

That your faith embodies some principles of the utmost value you now know that I not merely do not deny, but, as you say, enthusiastically admit. More ; I regard it as of great importance, not merely on account of its intrinsic merits, but because it has, in point of mere numbers, a very much more considerable following than is usually supposed. (I must remind you again that I speak mainly of the religious aspects of Positivism, of those aspects that relate to man as a creature of deep moral convictions and sublime spiritual aspirations, as a being that obeys, worships, and loves.) I do not, of course, mean to imply that the number of *professed* Positivists is very large ; but I hold that, in its main outlines, the creed of Comte is at this moment the creed of a very great many people who are not outwardly Positivists.

Aug.—Small indeed would be our hope for the future were it otherwise ! If we measured the progress of our faith by the number of its professed adherents we should often be tempted to despair. But we can see the truth gradually making its way outside our communion ; we can see the leaven working around us. Unmistakable signs are constantly arising of the approaching triumph of Positivist principles, and we can read them, take courage, and patiently bide our time. But this by way of parenthesis. Go on.

Aim.—What I have been trying to say is this. It appears to me that any one who tries to follow the devious windings of the *Zeitgeist*—the Time-spirit—at all closely, must see how largely it has been of late years identified with the spirit of Positivism. The essence of Positivism—how shall I formulate it ? rejection of the supernatural

(so-called) in favour of the human ; contemning of possibilities in comparison with actualities ; exchange of idle speculation for practical service—is it not, as it were, in the air ? Are not the opinions and the lives of the best men and women, in all the sects, becoming more and more imbued with it ? Many of them, it is true, would indignantly repudiate the notion of any affinity with Comtism. That does not alter the fact. Others would readily admit that, to whatever outward communion they still belonged, they were, practically, believers in the Religion of Humanity. Some have severed themselves from all forms, but in each case the same truth holds. In the minds of all alike theologism is, rapidly or slowly, consciously or unconsciously, giving way to Positivism, that is, to the pursuit of strictly verifiable knowledge, and to disinterested labour for the welfare of mankind.

Aug.—I find you again, Aimée, arguing, as strongly as it is possible to argue, on the side of Positivism. I am more and more mystified. If you admit, what of course we believe, that the Spirit of the Age and the Spirit of Positivism are one, how can you deny supremacy to our faith ?

Aim.—Not so fast, Austin. I did not say that they were one, but only that in recent years they have been largely identified. That is not quite the same thing. I have tried to explain to you that personally I would attribute greater weight to Comtism than I find is commonly attached to it, not only on account of the intrinsic value of much of Comte's teaching, but because that teaching systematizes more exactly than any other a prevailing tendency of modern thought outside the Positivist body.

But I was going on to observe that I do not think this harmony between Positivism and the *Zeitgeist* will be of long duration. I look upon it as a passing phase ; not

by any means as a permanent setting of the tide in a fixed direction. While the leading principles of Positivism, recognized or not, have had, and still have, very great attractions for a large class of superior minds, I hold that they do not rest upon a basis sufficiently strong to secure anything approaching to general acceptance for the system of which they form a part. I believe that the Time-spirit has latterly been largely coloured by Positivism. I do not believe that it will remain for any great length of time in unison with it. I shall explain myself better as we go on. Shall we now open the case for the prosecution in earnest, and shall I pass to the three points I have selected as sufficient for my purpose?

Aug.—The sooner you begin, the sooner I shall know whether I am to be entirely miserable.

Aim.—In the first place, then, I have to object to the system of Positivism simply this—that it is a *system*. Against its claims to be regarded as a *final* system I have already said enough to indicate tolerably plainly that I disallow them. But I would go further. I deprecate Positivism in that it is a system *at all*. It seems to me that the world, for the present, at any rate, has had enough of systems, and that to attempt to bind it down to a fresh one, however “universal,” however “relative,” however consonant with certain dominant chords of the mighty symphony of modern thought, is like seeking to imprison the winds, or resisting, with Dame Partington’s mop, the inroads of the illimitable ocean. Religious thought—by which I mean the deepest, the most earnest, the most humane, devoted, and disinterested thinking of the best and wisest men (apart from all the “doxies”)—is, just now, as it were, in solution. If it is ever again to be precipitated into anything

approaching to a complete synthesis (which I sometimes doubt), I cannot think that Comtism will be the precipitant. I regard with a sense of awe the vastness of the realm over which, in these last days, the human mind has dared to range. I recognize—not with trembling, but with solemn reverence and with chastened hope—the immensity of the domain over which the intellect of man in this century of ours holds sway. I cannot force it back into swaddling-clothes. I cannot shackle it with systems.

Aug.—Can you really believe that it is well that the reign of anarchy should be continued, that the human mind should go on weltering in a chaos of conflicting opinions and of irreconcilable theories? What good has ever come of such anarchy in the past? Have not the great periods of history been the periods of definite beliefs and of fixed principles of conduct? Have not the dark pages of history been those which record the decay of faith, the disintegration of principles, the disruption and dissolution resulting from the fatal delusion that the individual can possibly be “a law unto himself”? No. These systems of the past, imperfect and tentative as they were, were so far admirable, nay, indispensable, in that they afforded an indissoluble bond of union, and a firm basis of action to societies which, without them, would have contributed little indeed to human progress. And in taking up their broken threads, where they have become obsolete, to work them into our great universal scheme, we recognize to the full this special claim that they have upon our admiring reverence. “Understanding,” as the master has said, “their nature and their purpose better than the sectaries who still empirically adhere to them, we can see that each was in its time necessary as a preparatory step towards the final system,

in which all their partial and imperfect services will be combined." It is both inconceivable and distressing to me that you should fail to grasp the absolute necessity, not merely of a system—without which thought must necessarily be nugatory and action smitten with paralysis—but of a *final* system, of a grand synthesis which is indeed "the last effort of the human intellect," summing up the whole of the past, giving voice to the present, and embracing any conceivable future that may be in store for the race.

Now, at last, after æons of growth, after centuries of education and tottering struggles along the path of progress, Humanity stands forth, supreme, alone, sublimely conscious of herself, sublimely resolved that nothing—no weak-kneed superstition, no timid obscurantism, no ignorant opposition—shall henceforth stand between herself and the due development of her high destiny. Can you not recognize her beauty? Can you not realize her greatness? Can you not feel that she and she alone is the true centre of the universe, that in her we live and move and have our being, that around her our hopes and aspirations, our toil and our endeavour, must circle for ever, and that she only can be the rightful and rational object of our worship? And, if this is so, why should we take exception to a "system," which by codifying her everlasting laws and reducing her cult to order and to harmony, helps to bring both within the grasp of all? Further, why should we shrink from calling that "final," than which the future can contain nothing nobler, nothing truer, nothing more certainly within the certain limits of our capacities, nothing more exquisitely adapted to our varying needs?

For observe; it is not one side of our complex nature

only that the Religion of Humanity meets and satisfies. Differing in this from all previous religions, which appealed exclusively to one set of feelings, one set of ideas, which embraced a mere fraction of life, and by leaving nine-tenths of our faculties out in the cold, warped and stultified even those which they sanctioned, our religion covers the whole range of man's being, moral, intellectual, and practical, stimulates him to conduct, encourages him in research, guides, ennobles, and fertilizes his activity. Being thus as comprehensive in its scope as it is catholic in its sympathies and flexible in its methods, I conceive that we are justified in calling it "universal," as well as "final," and in looking forward to the day when it will become in actual fact the recognized faith of the entire civilized world.

Aim.—Granting the characteristic assumption of Positivism that man's relation to the Unseen is a thing about which he need no longer concern himself; granting also the Positivist assertion that there are certain fixed limits, beyond which, if the human intellect dares to soar, it will merely lose itself in barren "metaphysical" speculation; granting that it is a "*childish persistence*" which leads men still to hanker after "*causes*" as well as "*laws*," the "*why*" as well as the "*how*"; granting that nothing is worth while except the amelioration of the temporal (do not cavil at the word—it has always been used as the antithesis of eternal)—the temporal lot of human beings—I say, granting all this, I do not see why the Religion of Humanity should not lay claim to being the one, the final, "the universal religion to which all other religions bear witness." I could then have no objection to its claims to systematize the whole of thought, and to direct the whole of action for ever. But all this I do not grant.

I hold that as time goes on, the best minds—those minds which are now so deeply tinctured, consciously or otherwise, with the principles of Positivism, with the thirst for verifiable knowledge and the passion for humanity—will turn not less but more to that Unseen, that Power, that Infinite and Eternal Energy, that God, which, not less surely now than in the days of Paul, surrounds and interpenetrates in mysterious majesty our momentary being, *above all, and through all, and in us all*. I hold, moreover, that it is not the part of any man or of any body of men to play Canute to the ever-rolling tide of man's aspiring intellect, to say to it, "This is practical, the other useless; this is possible to you, the other hopeless; this is 'positive,' the other 'metaphysical.'" Who that has traced the onward movement of that unhasting but un-resting tide from the dawn of history, can dare to set bounds to it now, can presume to determine the limits beyond which its activity will be fruitless?

Aug.—I had imagined it universally acknowledged that there are certain very definite boundary-lines, beyond which, if the human intellect attempts to soar, it must always retire bruised and beaten. Positivism here merely emphasizes a truth pretty generally admitted from the days of Titans and Babel-builders downwards.

Aim.—I am not sure that a little too much has not been made of these "definite boundary-lines." I dare to believe in boundless possibilities of further progress for man, not merely in regard to the matter, but the manner of his knowing. In other words, I do not see why faculty should not be developed, as evolution advances (as well as knowledge extended), why we should make up our minds that we are *never* to apprehend what is at present beyond our range. But I am getting into

deep water. To return to the safe shallows : of this at least I am unalterably convinced, that in the perpetual endeavour to overleap these limits—fixed or not—lies the secret of man's greatness, nay, the very stamp and seal of his manhood. It is no "childish persistence" which leads him to fling himself against the barriers that meet him upon every hand in the search for truth ; it is no Titanic folly which urges him to "look before and after, and pine for what is not." Why should he be for ever meekly tabulating "*laws*" with the pedant ? He demands the heritage of the *man*—the right to investigate "*causes*." And, Comte notwithstanding, materialism notwithstanding, all timorous objectors and all contemptuous indifferentists notwithstanding, I dare to assert that it will be an evil day for humanity when this right is surrendered—even in the name of *humanity*—when man no longer concerns himself with those mighty problems which have been at once his torment and his glory since time began.

Aug.—What would your scientific friends say to all this ? I do not ask you to consider it from the point of view of religious Positivism, which holds all speculation not directly tending to the happiness and good of Humanity worse than useless. But science, which you love, does science sanction these excursions into the realm of the unknowable ?

Aim.—Mock science—no ; true science—yes. How should science, herself the great miracle-worker of our age, hold any miracle impossible ? Believe me, she is growing less bigoted, less dogmatic than of yore. She is young yet, and she is still under the spell of her own young strength, destructive, combative, arrogant ; but moderation will come with age, and by and by we shall

hear less of definite boundaries and fixed limits and vain flights into the unknowable.

But speaking of science, I was examining just now the list of 150 volumes which Comte calls "The Positivist Library for the Nineteenth Century," and I was struck by the absence from the scientific section of the works of him who has been justly called the "greatest revolutionist, as well as the foremost evolutionist" of his day. This is of course for the very simple reason that Comte's list was drawn up before the "Origin of Species" transformed biology and modified the relative position of man in the universe more profoundly than the relative position of our planet was modified by the discoveries which we associate with the name of Copernicus. I merely mention it as an instance of the futility, in this age, at least, of attempting to confine thought within the limits of any cut-and-dried system whatsoever. If Comte thought proper to form a Positivist Library, at least he should have taken care how he called it a library "*for the Nineteenth Century.*"

Aug.—If you only knew how profoundly indifferent we are to these "revolutions" of scientific thought. Theories and hypotheses come and go, but man remains, and it is a great deal more important to us to make him better and nobler than to know whether or no he was evolved from an ape or an oyster.

Aim.—Yet you cannot fail to see how thought is and must be transformed by such a discovery as that of Evolution? Knowing that it has convulsed society, penetrated to the very pulpits of our orthodox churches, modified the utterances of our leading thinkers in every department of intellectual activity, you will not maintain that Positivism can be entirely unaffected by it?

For the rest, I believe it to be only one of many grave transformations of thought that are at hand and that will crowd upon us perhaps even before this nineteenth century closes. At least the twentieth century is big with them. The great religious system of the future—if such there is to be—if a really comprehensive and universal synthesis is ever to exist again—will have to take count of them. For the present, according to me, it behoves system-mongers to be silent. “*The time is great.*” Again is darkness upon the face of the deep. Religion waits, awestruck, in breathless patience, in solemn hope, for a new voice to be heard above the ferment of thought and the clamour of opinion, saying more imperiously even than Orthodoxy, more definitely even than Science, more tenderly even than Positivism, “*Let there be Light.*”

That other assumption of Positivism to which I alluded—that the human lot is worth ameliorating, apart from a future life, will more properly be dealt with under my third head.

Aug.—Before you go on to the second, I should like to say that, apart from the abstract question, my personal experience is certainly not in favour of abandoning system. I do not know how it may be with some few favoured spirits, who would seem to be superior to the almost universal need of systematic belief, but taking myself as a fair average specimen of mankind, and speaking of that which I know, I have no hesitation in saying that I consider fixed principles, firm convictions, a definite creed, an organized government and worship, to be absolutely indispensable. I was myself miserable, useless and desolate, until I found such a creed. Without it, I am convinced that the majority of men, like myself, must drift into a weakening scepticism, if not into

moral evil. Scepticism means evil. Vagueness, faithlessness, negation, imply decay, as when the salt has lost his savour.

Aim.—Arguments such as these have driven thousands and tens of thousands into the arms of the great religious organization of mediævalism, the Catholic Church. I can understand that they might attract some minds to Comte's modern equivalent for it. Do not suppose that I would not allow them their full weight. I appreciate to the full the need, not only of the average mind, but of every rightly constituted mind, for absolute conviction, for whole-hearted belief—even for an outward organization, which shall give form and body to a definite creed. I only refuse—assuming such an organization to be possible—to institute it rashly; I merely hesitate to plant prematurely the foundations of that “new fabric of religion adapted to the coming time” in the deep desire for which I yield to no man. The depth of our need must not betray us into hasty constructive efforts which do not really meet the case; our aching hunger for a universal faith, our unspeakable yearning for inward harmony and for outward unity must not blind us to the remoteness of the nearest conceivable realization of our dream.

But we cannot linger any longer over this aspect of Positivism.

The second count of my indictment against it is one which, knowing, as you do, what has been the absorbing interest of my life for some years past, I think you must divine before I speak—I mean its attitude towards “the problem of the nineteenth century”—Woman.

Aug.—I foresaw that the chief obstacle to your adoption of our faith would be here. I know with how much ardour and self-devotion you have worked for what

appeared to you to be the elevation, especially for the political emancipation of your sex. And, while doubting for a long while past whether you were upon the right lines, and withholding, perforce, the sympathy I would fain have given to your methods, I have ever respected your aims, and honoured you for the loftiness and disinterestedness of your motives. Then you have been honourably distinguished for the "*suaviter in modo*." Your manner has been ever womanly. The zeal of youth has not betrayed you into onesidedness. Your words, written and spoken, have been strong as your enthusiasm, but sweet as your face, and gentle as your soul. Aimée! you know that I have loved you almost from a child—you will not tell me that there is radical, irreconcilable difference between us here? I watch your eyes as they wander from my face to the child's face; I see in them all the motherhood of the "*perfect woman, nobly planned*." Here, in your flower-scented room (there seem to me to be as many violets round us as books), I find everywhere traces of delicate womanly taste, and the passionate love of home which stamps individuality upon even inanimate things. Dear, believe me, you have been led astray by this mistaken movement which would persuade you that your sphere is other than this, that your tasks are other than these. You have been caught in a current to which the anarchy of the time has lent factitious strength. Come out of it with me, and love me, and learn with me from the Religion of Humanity how the position of woman may be indefinitely improved; how she may become educator, priestess—nay, divinity—without encountering the turmoil and the contamination of active life, and without leaving the sacred precincts of the Home.

Aim.—I am very thankful that you give me credit for some of those distinctively womanly attributes my very reverence for which has led to my adopting the “mistaken” course you deprecate. (This seems a paradox, I know, but I shall explain.) I am glad too that you acknowledge my fidelity to those dominant enthusiasms of my life, the love of children, the love of flowers, and the love of home. I am glad that you do not take me for one of those women—if such women there be—I do not often meet them—who take up public duty *instead of* domestic duty, not *as well as* domestic duty.

Aug.—Apart from other objections, has a woman time or strength for both?

Aim.—She will have when marriage is understood, when family life is rightly constituted. Unmarried women have as it is but too much time, and as to the strength, the capacity for useful work wasted by the conventions which debar them from active life—I could expatiate on that head for an hour, were not the subject threadbare. When I think of this terrible waste, when I think of the privation, the dull half-conscious suffering, or the acute too-conscious torture that are caused by current prejudices, I am amazed that the doors of every available profession, occupation, or calling have not been flung open in very pity; that fathers and brothers have not out of sheer compassion encouraged, nay, urged, their daughters and sisters to take up some work other than home routine, which, by making a solitary life interesting and fruitful, should make it almost happy. Do you know that it is when I muse on these things that I am chiefly tempted to agree with that beautiful soul, who, in despair of kindling in the hearts of other men a spark of the heroic flame that consumed his own,

declared the other day that "the world's male chivalry was extinct"?

Aug.—When you speak of *chivalry*, you pronounce a word that is ever on the lips and in the hearts of Positivists. You give it a new and strange meaning; but the thing itself, true chivalry, the cherishing, the revering, the worship of woman, this is of the very essence of Positivism. We look back wistfully to the "admirable institution" of mediæval chivalry, and one of our leading aims is the revival of it, "in a shape adapted to the altered state of ideas and feelings" of this age. I might perhaps say, our leading aim. For we hold the worship of Woman to be, not merely beautiful and desirable, as it appeared to the knights-errant of feudal times, but actually essential as the means by which man rises to the conception of Humanity as a whole. In the Master's own words, "The worship of Woman, begun in private, and afterwards publicly celebrated, is necessary in man's case to prepare him for any effectual worship of Humanity." And I ask you, Aimée, can there be any more glorious, more exalted position than the one thus yielded by us to woman? Recognizing in her, as we do, the impersonation of the highest good within the reach of humanity—pure and self-sacrificing morality—bowing before her undoubted moral superiority, and submissively learning from her those holy lessons which the harsh contacts of active life ever tend to make us forget; entrusting to her the sole care and culture of children until a much later period than the one commonly assigned; enthroning her as queen not only of the home, but of the inner sanctuary of the religious life of every one of us—can love and reverence do more? Did even the loftiest spirits of the age of chivalry aspire to do as much?

Aim. — You speak of “chivalry,” and again of “chivalry.” And you tell me that when I speak of it, I give a new and strange meaning to the word. Listen, Austin. There is a chivalry (I am using the word now, not in its general sense of pitying reverence for all things weak and oppressed, but in its narrower sense of man’s respect for woman), there is a modern chivalry which is not merely mediæval chivalry “adapted to the altered state of ideas and feelings of this age,” but which stands to mediæval chivalry in the relation of civilization to savagery—nay, of truth to falsehood, of light to darkness. This new chivalry manifests its respect for woman, not by shutting off nine-tenths of the world from her ken, but by making her a joyous partaker in all that the world has to give of interest and of worthy delight, in all elevated thought, in all disinterested labour, in all varied and far-spreading activity. This new chivalry, recognizing in the “woman-movement” no mushroom growth of recent years, but a gradual development beginning with the dawn of history, and destined in the future to assume proportions corresponding with the progress of the past, sets itself to remove every obstacle in the way of such further progress, and, with a true knight-errantry, goes forth to slay the giants of prejudice and the enchanters of tradition and the dragons of selfishness, jealousy, and spite that molest the woman of to-day. It stops its ears to the perennial argument, “Women are weak,” and answers manfully, “The more reason not to heap artificial obstructions and ‘imaginary and scare-crow’ difficulties in their path.” To the objection, “Women are childish,” it generously replies, “We have made them so;—at least, if they continue so, it shall not be our fault.” To the parrot-cry, “Woman’s true sphere

is the home," it returns, "Let the home be her citadel, not her prison, the basis of all that is sound in her labour, the source of all that is healthful in her inspiration, not the engine of cramped sympathies and distorted faculties, not a little freer than the Harem, a little happier than the Zenana. This modern chivalry perceives how illusory it is to suppose that chivalry can save woman from the universal human lot of labour and of pain, and, adopting a truer and a wiser course, it bends all its endeavours to making her labour less barren and her pain less ignoble. It throws wide to her every career to which, rightly or wrongly, wisely or foolishly, she may aspire, bidding her at the least test her skill, try her strength, with help and encouragement, not hindrance and repression, from man. It confers upon her the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship. It welcomes her—almost for the first time in history—as a comrade, knowing that friendship is a thing more dear and sacred to her even than worship, at least than the worship which is too often an excuse for selfishness and a veil for contempt.

Aug.—Believe me, Aimée, I would heartily endorse much that you say, but with this difference. You would seem to be speaking of women generally, I should apply your remarks to exceptional women. You must not think that we do not duly recognize the existence, both in the past and in the present, of exceptional vocations for women. Our religion sets apart a special day—the Festival of Holy Women—for the adoration of those heroines of your sex to whom special talents or special circumstances have given a deserved pre-eminence. Why do you smile?

Aim.—To think that it is but once in four years, on

the additional day in leap year, that the worshippers of Humanity find time to adore eminent women. And again to think that I looked in vain the other day among those "portraits of her greatest known servants" which adorn the walls of the Church of Humanity for Saint Theresa and Saint Catherine of Siena, for the Joan of Arcs and Grace Darlings, the Mary Somervilles, Elizabeth Brownings, Elizabeth Frys. Bear with me, Austin, if I tell you that I cannot believe in your Festival of Holy Women. I cannot believe in a reverence for greatness which does not regard greatness as typical rather than "exceptional," which does not encourage the humblest to aspire to it, the least gifted to mould and shape life, in some sort, after its pattern. It is a mockery to say that you revere great women, when, according to you, they have no right to exist; when, under your system, logically applied, every spark of noble ambition in them would be stifled at the birth. Can you maintain that on Positive principles a Madame de Staël would not have been discouraged in her duel with Napoleon, a Mrs. Fry dissuaded from going forth to do battle with officialism and obscurantism in the interests of outcast humanity? No. Your "worship" of such women is stultified by the pains you take that such women shall not exist, by the mere fact of your regarding in the one sex as "exceptional" what in the other you regard as ideal.

Aug.—I do not, of course, deny, that our system is based on the recognition of fundamental difference between the sexes. In this respect I fear that we are very old-fashioned, and quite at issue with some modern schools. At the same time, I scarcely think that you do justice to the position of women under Positivism. In

the first place, you forget that we think so well of the intellect of woman as to concede to her an education corresponding in every particular with that of man. You must admit that this is an advance upon anything that has gone before.

Aim.—Do not think me guilty of using exaggerated language if I say that I look upon this “advance” as a sort of refinement of cruelty, unaccompanied by advance in other directions; that to fit persons for activity and enjoyment of the highest order, and then rigidly to close every avenue to such activity and such enjoyment, is merely to apply a fresh, and peculiarly ingenious, instrument of torture. It would be more merciful, as well as more logical, if you ceased to educate us at all. That course however, you are, in your own interest, debarred from taking. If we are to take charge of the education of your children until they approach manhood, we must, of course, be qualified to teach them all which you desire that they should know. And so, for that wondrous largesse of Moliere’s—(how can women ever be grateful enough for so much condescension?) “*Je consens qu’une femme ait des clartés de tout,*” you go so far as to substitute the general proposition that “*it is fitting*” that women should be enlightened on all subjects included in the educational course of their sons. When the arbitrary “*consent*” of man has been exchanged for the abstract doctrine, it would seem that the last word has been said, that masculine magnanimity can no further go!

Aug.—I wish I could make you understand. I wish I could make you see that we value the influence of women not only as it affects children, not solely from an educational, or, as you would call it, self-interested point

of view, but as a modifying force of supreme importance in the social system generally. Give me the "General View" for a moment. See here, page 161, "*It is not merely in the family that their influence will be required.*" Their duty will often be to call philosophers and people back to that unity of purpose which originated in the first place with themselves, and which each of the other elements" (*i.e.* the reflective and active classes, always faultier in their inspiration than the affective class) "is often disposed to violate." Here is an application of our theory that "the affective sex is the moral providence of our species" which you have, I think, overlooked. You may object to the worship we pay to this "moral providence," on the ground that it is sentimental and hollow. You cannot, surely, tax with unreality the prominent part assigned to it by us as a factor in human affairs. The supremacy of feeling—in other words, the supremacy of Woman—is the very keystone of Positivism. And if we are desirous that her influence shall be brought to bear in ways which neither violate nature nor tend to injure her special and most precious characteristics, that is because we reverence more—not less—the principles which she impersonates and the share allotted to them and to her in the system of the future.

Aim.—I must be plain with you, Austin. There is something in all this which—so it seems to me—does not ring true. I cannot get rid of an impression of insincerity in the whole attitude of Positivism towards woman. This very concession to her of an influence outside the family, upon "philosophers and people"—is it not, like education, an empty boon, when, at the same time, you deny her the right to be herself either a thinker or a worker? Is it not, like the worship paid to

those women who have painfully fought their way through obstacle and discouragement of every kind to eminence, a phantom honour? Give me back those books, and I will show you a few passages which seem to bear me out in saying that the Positive respect for woman is not quite a genuine thing; that the Positive woman-worship savours rather of a cant than a cult. It could not well be otherwise, the fatal mistake once made of putting her in a separate class, docketing and pigeon-holing her as a being apart from man, deliberately postulating unlikeness, instead of postulating similarity in all that really constitutes a human being. This, I venture to assert, is not Nature's way, if by Nature be understood, not the stereotyped tradition of semi-barbarous ages, but the law of growth, the principle of development working through centuries of change. Nature recognizes no subdivision—no essential subdivision that is—of her great class of *adult humanity*, and in so far as Positivism subdivides it, and tends to keep up obsolescent views of half the human race, Positivism puts itself out of court as an exponent of the true Spirit of the Age.

Aug.—Is it so very certain that it is Comte and not Nature (whatever interpretation we may choose to give the word) who has put woman “into a separate class, docketing and pigeon-holing her as a being apart from man”?

Aim.—At least the *Zeitgeist* pleads that the question whether the seclusion (that is, the subjection) of women is a “natural” or an artificial arrangement shall be an open one—open too, not merely for years, but for generations, until education and enfranchisement (in the widest sense) have had a fair trial. Comte, on the other hand, does not seem to be cognizant that a question

exists at all. He takes for granted that a woman is a being as distinct from a man as—well!—let me do him justice—as a goddess or an angel. He differs from his predecessors mainly in this very thing, that he places her (ostensibly) a little above, rather than a little below male humanity. And he thinks that he has benefited her amazingly in the process, and that his mediæval chivalry revived will settle any possible claim that the wildest advocates of her rights could make in the future. He is absolutely blind to the real tendency of the age, which is to give her, not incense, but breathing-room; not patronage, but equality; not an unsubstantial divinity, but a human soul. After all he is French; and it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for even the better sort of Frenchman to rid himself of the Latin taint of a half-civilized attitude towards women.

Now let me prove my charge against him out of his own mouth, the charge that there is a certain hypocrisy—unconscious hypocrisy if you will—in his apotheosis of woman. I said that it was but an *ostensible* sovereignty which your system allots to her. Practically, I find that it is not sovereignty at all, but submission that is expected of her. On page 18 of the Catechism I read, “It is solely in this sanctuary” (the hearts of women) “that, at the present day, we can find the *noble submissiveness* of spirit required for a systematic regeneration.” Again, page 228, “The priesthood . . . will . . . make women feel *the merit of submission*, by drawing out to its consequences this admirable maxim of Aristotle: *The greatest strength of woman lies in overcoming the difficulty of obeying.*” There, I think, you have the barbaric principle in its naked hideousness. It is precisely the assiduous cultivation of this “*noble submissiveness*” in

women which has brought about the state of things against which modern civilization is now in revolt. It is this notion of *obedience* being the primary duty of one half of the adult population which has corrupted the ruling class (men) by investing selfishness with the semblance of right, and tyranny with the dignity of law. I do not pause to make exceptions, for I know that you give me credit for speaking of principles alone—not of persons.

Aug.—I prefer to hear you out without interruption of any kind. What are those newspaper-cuttings that have served you as markers in the Catechism? Do not put them on one side. You were about to read them.

Aim.—I hesitated for fear of dwelling too long on this subject. But—after all—since it is of capital importance to me—Well, these cuttings from *The Times* seemed to me to illustrate so forcibly the havoc wrought among even highly-civilized peoples by centuries of wrong teaching about women, that I slipped them into the Catechism at those two passages on the chance of having time to read them to you. They refer to some letters contributed last summer to *The Times of India* by a Hindoo lady. In the first letter the writer dwells chiefly on the sorrows of married women in India.

“Without the least fault of mine I am doomed to seclusion. Every aspiration to rise above my ignorant sisters is looked upon with suspicion and interpreted in the most uncharitable manner. Our law-givers, being men, have painted themselves pure and noble, and laid every conceivable sin and impurity at our door. . . . The treatment which servants receive from European masters is far better than that which falls to the lot of us Hindoo women. We are treated worse than beasts. We are regarded as playthings.

"The loss of mental and physical freedom which a girl experiences the moment she steps into her husband's house cannot be realized. . . ."

"She ends," says *The Times* correspondent, commenting on this letter, "with a powerful appeal to the leaders of the Hindoo community. Her words may be commended to certain native reformers who devote so much time and energy to political discussion. She says, 'If you succeed in bringing about a salutary reform in the position of Hindoo women, then the spread of education, the development of arts and sciences, the production of an able-bodied, strong-minded race of men and women—in fact the mental and material prosperity of India—will follow as a matter of course, and India will revert to her once proud position among the nations.'"

In the second letter from the same lady, quoted by the same correspondent, the too well-known horrors of Indian widowhood are graphically described, with this significant appendix: "Suppose it had been enacted that when a man lost his wife he should continue celibate, live on coarse fare, be tabooed in society, wear mourning weeds for the remainder of his life, and practice never-ending austerities, would not my countrymen have long since revolted against such inhuman treatment?" "She goes on" (here *The Times* correspondent speaks) "to give a striking illustration of the venerable head of a Hindoo family sending out his creatures to hunt down a girl of ten to bless his remaining years, and then turning to his widowed granddaughter of fifteen and telling her that her widowhood is a punishment for the loss of her husband, which can only be expiated by a life of austerity, devotion, and purity. 'A Hindoo Lady'

concludes by saying that her widowed countrywomen must bear their hard lot and pine in solitude for centuries, till the pressure of legislation or the influence of foreign civilization comes to their help and restores them to their proper place in the scale of humanity."

Aug.—I must be plain with you in my turn, Aimeé, and tell you that you do Comte grievous injustice in supposing that even a perversion of his teaching could ever furnish a parallel to such a *régime* of barbaric cruelty and hideous oppression. You are not prone to exaggeration for purposes of argument; but when you go to an archaic civilization, stereotyped alike in what it retains of good and in what it has developed of evil, in order to confute a system whose watchword is progress, and which has, after all, illustrated the true law of progress in nothing more than in its treatment of women, I cannot hear you without protest.

Aim.—Do you sufficiently realize to what extent a single fundamental error, such as that of the modern Hindoo in relation to half his race, arrests progress and fossilizes a living civilization into a tissue of rigid survivals? If we may believe the writer of these letters (clearly no mean authority), the secret of India's decadence lies here. Her view is of course open to dispute. For my own part, I endorse it. For I hold it impossible to overestimate the intimate relation between the status of women in any society, and "the mental and material prosperity" of that society. The fact is recognized in its entirety by almost no one—dimly apprehended perhaps by some few—but ignored by the leaders of thought—really grasped only by a handful of those "crotcheteers" who rough-hew in loneliness the commonplaces of the future. I do not intend a greater

disrespect to Comte than to the gentlemen I meet every day in London drawing-rooms, and to our received teachers in philosophy and morals, when I lay down the general principle that no system—however based upon progress—yea, though it blazon “Progress the end” never so confidently upon lintel and doorpost, can progress much and long, without full, fearless, uncompromising justice to women. I am not, of course, so rash as to predict for any modern system such results as have followed on the violation of “nature” in this particular by the Hindoo. But I cannot plead guilty to exaggeration or injustice in maintaining that the principle which has been at the root of India’s decadence, and the principle which I find underlying all the tall talk about woman-worship in Comte’s writings, are identical. The unhappy Hindoo woman is actually *treated* worse than common drudge or four-footed beast. But when I read over and over again in the works of the French philosopher of “*women and the people*,” “*women and proletaries* ; when I find in one place (page 96 of the Catechism women ranked with *animals* (!) as “*auxiliaries*” to man—I see clearly that from this to the Zenana is but a step—that there is not, at bottom, much to choose between the progressive Positivist and the reactionary Brahmin. “*The chief function of woman*,” Comte tells us on the same page, is “*to form and perfect man*.” Observe—no personality, no soul, no life, of her own. She exists “to form and perfect *man*.” That appears to me to be exactly the ideal of the Hindoo paterfamilias in those letters. His interpretation of the precise manner in which his being is to be complemented by the other sex may differ somewhat from that of the Comtist. The root-error of both is the same. Each practically regards

himself (ay, even the self-less Positivist—strange comment, all this part of him, upon his altruism !) as the central luminary, around which all other created things, women included, revolve in planetary subjection. Both fail to see that the sovereignty of the world is dual ; that, in an infinitely truer and deeper sense than Paul divined, the man is not without the woman, nor the woman without the man ; that the true civilization is that which neither maltreats woman, nor glosses over with phrases a profound conviction of her inferiority, but which gladly co-operates with the travailing Spirit of the Age in combating her wrongs, and hastening forward her development.

In taking leave of this branch of our subject, I have one word to add—a prayer for forgiveness if I have said too much, or if here and there I have seemed to speak bitterly.

Aug.—From your point of view I hardly see how you could speak other than bitterly. As to saying too much, I have long wished to hear from your own lips a clear exposition of your views on this subject. And I will tell you frankly that a good deal of what you have said has impressed me much. Your words move me, as *your* words could not move me, but for my knowledge of your character, my intimate conviction of your candour, fairness, and disinterestedness. If one whose sweet and selfless humility of soul first drew me to her in the happy years when we were boy and girl together, can speak thus strongly and sadly of what she deems wrong done to her and to her sex, at least, I shall ponder her words with reverence, not attempt hastily and rashly to controvert them. Give me time. With time—with hope—there may be ways——

Aim.—The child stirs. (Hush, my sweet, hush !) Why are cradles out of fashion ? The softest motion of my foot soothes her again. What did I want to say ? Ah, yes ! one more thing. I had to explain to you why the quiet, domestic, and rather timid girl you used to know took to politics, and to clamouring for the Parliamentary vote. I said it was my very love of gentleness that spurred me to the *mêlée*. You see of all the reasons why women should be enfranchised, there seemed to me to be none stronger than the need of some woman's virtues, gentleness, compassion, simplicity, conscientiousness, in politics. Only the other day a prophet of your own remarked that what vitally distinguishes Positivists from other men is the recognition of what Comte called "the spiritual power," or, as we should say, of "moral force" in politics. Now, under modern conditions, it appears to me that women cannot really form a part of this "spiritual power," that they cannot, to any purpose, assist in bringing this "moral force" to bear, without the vote. Rightly or wrongly, no one, in these days, is taken seriously who does not possess it. Once more, I find insincerity in those who exalt "indirect influence" and the like, before they have at least given a trial to that direct and obvious channel of influence in favour of which the modern world has unanimously elected.

Aug.—Yet, depend upon it, it was in a real enough sense that Comte included women in his spiritual power. Whatever may be thought of his refusal to them of direct political power (a refusal, be it remembered, which is extended equally to priests and people), it cannot be denied that he valued their co-operation as dominant factors in the moral force to the extent of repeatedly de-

claring that his system could not hope to prosper without their support.

Aim.—As here, in the Catechism, page 9, where he remarks that the severe *régime* of Positive Philosophy “is too antipathetic to our present mental state for it ever to prevail, unless by the irresistible support of *women and the proletaries.*” Or here, in the General View, page 154, “*Unless the new philosophy can obtain the support of women,* the attempt to substitute it for theology in the regulation of social life had better be abandoned.” Or, page 161: “In Catholicism, their co-operation, though valuable, was not of primary importance . . . but *to Positivism they are indispensable.*” I marked those passages because they appeared to me to afford strong proof of my position, that Comte’s system is not destined to the success he hoped and predicted for it. The greater its reliance upon the support of women, the less confidently, according to me, can it reckon upon anything approaching to universal acceptance. For, if I am not greatly mistaken, Positivism will, in the future, commend itself less—rather than more—to women. And this, not for the reasons that Comte apprehended, the feminine clinging to tradition, the feminine dread of the modern scientific spirit (wrongly identified with Positivism); but on the widely different ground that Positivism misreads the past of woman, misunderstands her present, and mistakes her future; that on this question it is hopelessly at issue with the best thought of the age, and is more likely to remain so that it confuses “chivalry” with reaction, and prates of worship, where it should practise justice.

* * * * *

Aug.—“Almost thou persuadest me.” But I must have time. . . . Much of this is new to me. . . .

Aim.—If we have more talks together, you shall confute me at leisure.

Aug.—*If!*

Aim.—For the present—good-bye. I had not reckoned on our adjourning until to-day, and I made an engagement——

Aug.—An inviolable one—with a pauper?

Aim.—As it happens, this time, with a duchess. But don't wrong me, Austin. I have a social conscience, too. I am to meet this new romance-writer. Ah, how late! Come again to-morrow, at the same time.

III.

Aug.—I said yesterday that I had foreseen your principal objection to Positivism would be the view it takes of the position of women ; but since then I have felt that your third charge would be a yet graver one. I can see that you have reserved the most serious difficulty of all for to-day. I have guessed what it is, Aimée. From hints you have let fall, and from what I know of you, I feel convinced that I am right. You are not content with our subjective immortality.

Aim.—" *Not content* " seems to understate the case. " *Not content* " scarcely pictures my aloofness to the doctrine. It does not adumbrate the desolation with which I see it (under different names) daily gaining ground. It does not even hint at the wound to my heart when I knew that *my friend*—

Aug.—Aimée! . . . Again I am fairly bewildered. . . . This—from *you* ! I knew something (I see now how little) of your feeling. But I was credulous enough to believe that a very little explanation, persuasion, would remove at least this difference between us. I had reckoned confidently on your courageous spirit, your inherent nobleness of nature. I could not imagine you refusing for long to give ear to one of the most beautiful, most consolatory articles of our faith. I did not dream of your clinging with so much tenacity to the old future life of theologism. I expected the heroic resignation, the sublime altruism of our conception to appeal to you with irresistible force. I cannot now believe but that I have misunderstood you. Some hesitation—some reluctance—that would be intelligible

—but this energy of repudiation, this protest — with tears——

Aim.—A little patience and the mystery will be unravelled. Even before hearing me, I expect you to acquit me of being swayed by passion, by prejudice, or by merely personal motives of any kind.

Aug.—You ask what was granted long ago. But you perplex me increasingly. Your experience must have been widely different from my own. For my own part, our doctrine of subjective immortality, the incorporation into the Great Being, the living again in the lives of others, a sanctifying, purifying, vivifying presence (if we have been true to our high calling), came as a blessed relief. The cruel result of my Calvinistic upbringing was to fill my boyish mind with a horrible dread of eternal torment. Even since I attained to manhood my nights have been tortured by the visions that appalled me then. When I found out their hollowness, all my religion left me. As to heaven, it had always been eclipsed by hell. Such faith in it as I had disappeared with the dread of hell. The rest is a blank—till I discovered in the Positive immortality a solution of the problem which, for me, left nothing to be desired. Here, more than in any tenet of Positivism, I found that complete subjugation of personal desire, that sinking of self in Humanity which first attracted me in Comte's writings. And hitherto I have been sanguine enough to believe, with Comte, that women also, "even those who at first should regret the loss of chimerical hopes, will not be slow to feel the moral superiority of our subjective immortality, so thoroughly altruistic in its nature, as compared with the old objective immortality which could never be other than radically egoistic."

Aim.—You say a good deal, and Comte says a good deal, about “the old future life of theologism,” “the old objective immortality,” and so forth. Let me point out, once for all, that with the old ideals of personal immortality, as you and he understand them, the modern “eternal hope,” as I understand it, has absolutely nothing to do. To declaim against the “Christian egoism” which creates a heavenly Jerusalem merely because its earthly Jerusalem is laid waste, to tilt at the mercenary childishness of mediævalism with its scheme of rewards and punishments (relegated to another world because they were clearly impracticable in this), to scoff at the fatuity of clinging to fictions, which, even granting them not ignoble, are at least proved to be chimerical, and consequently unworthy of the attention of serious men and women—all this is, in these days, simply a slaying of the slain.

Aug.—But what remains? If you abandon the orthodox (as we say the egoistic) doctrine; if you do not want to be compensated hereafter for suffering here, or to be rewarded for virtue; why cling to the notion of any sort of objective future existence at all? Why cherish a “modern eternal hope” of any kind, except the hope of Positivism, the desire of all worthy servants of Humanity to become an integral part of her corporate life, if it may be, to join the invisible choir of her helpers, comforters, exemplars?

Aim.—The reason is simple. Because without such a hope, we, who cling to it, hold sustained action for the good of the world, for the benefit of humanity, to be impossible. More; we do not believe that what is called the higher life in any of its aspects—Goethe’s life “*im Ganzen, Guten, Schönen*”—would be found, ultimately, to

be practicable. More; we find that the surrender of this hope strikes at the root of everything that is holy, beautiful, and desirable, stops the mainspring of the world, shivers the very keystone of Positivism itself to atoms, *in sapping the foundations of Love*.

Aug.—One word, before I ask you to expound your meaning more clearly. If this hope for some kind of continuance of individual being (objective being, we should say) can be *but a hope*; if, in the nature of things, it can never approach to being a certainty (the evidence to the contrary, indeed, all but amounting to proof); are we justified, as rational beings, in giving it prominence? Is it practical, even if it be not highly unscientific, to bestow upon a faint *possibility* (granting it to be a possibility) any of that attention which is so earnestly craved by the actual, by the crying human need besieging us on every hand?

Aim.—I deem it highly practical. And for this reason. If that human cry which sounds in my ears night and day; which (I may say it, for it is no merit of mine) colours everything I do and write and think and dream; if that *De Profundis* of hunger, need, and anguish is but the voice of a perishing atom which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the foul nothingness of the grave—I, for one, have no heart to listen to it.

Aug.—Is not this because you have not yet assimilated the central idea of Positivism, the insignificance of the individual in comparison of the race? You have not learned to look upon Humanity—not (like our predecessors) as a mere congeries of individuals—but as an organic whole, a great unity, a mighty collective being. This conception once grasped, you will learn to look away from the individual lot to the sublime history of

the race. You will find in the contemplation of the future of Humanity a more satisfying, because a more rational and more altruistic, delight than the most sublimated "eternal hope" of a personal kind can ever afford. A worthier hope will inspire you. Filled with the idea of progress, of the constant onward and upward growth of the Great Being (a progress to which the humblest of her constituent atoms can, however infinitesimally, contribute), you will find your happiness in helping to modify the inexorable laws which govern her development, and in securing for her, under the guidance of the past, a richer, nobler, and happier future.

Aim.—I must, indeed, plead guilty to not having "assimilated" this characteristic conception of Positivism. But this is not for want of familiarity with it. I have brooded over the idea for years. I have recognized its hold (under various names) upon numbers of thinking minds. I have striven to find in it—not satisfaction—that I knew to be out of the question for me; but, at the least, motive, a stimulus to action strong enough to counteract the promptings of pessimism, an inspiration vital enough to nourish the springs of altruism, and make self-sacrifice (*from the point of view of others*) worth while. And in this endeavour I have signally failed. I have tried in vain to discover anything substantial, anything tangible, in these grandiloquent phrases, Mankind, Humanity, Great Being, Collective Being, Great Unity, and so forth. For me they remain but phrases, rhetorical expressions, more unreal, because more absolutely unrealizable, than that geographical expression, Italy, appeared to the hungry aspiration of the patriot-statesman. Humanity, in the Comtist sense, is an empty abstraction, a mere juggle with which

the haters of metaphysics have once more proved the ineradicable tendency of mankind to substitute words for things. There is no Humanity in the sense of an organism composed of the lives of men.

Aug.—Will you tell me that there is no Milky Way because the Milky Way is composed of innumerable stars, no solar system because the solar system is made up of sun, planets, satellites, and comets? Will you tell me that a wall, built of thousands of bricks, is an abstraction, that the term man is a metaphysical juggle, because a number of organs, in many instances of separable organs, constitute the man?

Aim.—The parallel in all these cases is incomplete, because in all these cases the element of consciousness is wanting to the component parts of the several aggregates. A star in the Milky Way does not *know*, a brick in a wall does not *feel*, the hand or foot or eye of a man does not *love*. Let us not play with words. There is, of course, a use of the term humanity which is both legitimate and indispensable. But in the concrete Comtist sense; in the sense of a living organism having the continuity, on a grand scale, of the individual life; in the sense of a sort of magnified human being, with a history and with a future, with loves and hates, capable of magnificent achievements, susceptible of indefinite progress, adorable as a hero, worshipful as a saint; Humanity, thus understood, has no real existence, and can only be exalted into a deity by those who are bent on having a deity at all costs, even at the cost of relapsing into scholasticism by the hugging of abstractions and the idolatry of phrases.

What is humanity? It came into being when you, when I, when the child there, opened our eyes to the

light ; it will pass into nothingness when your life is done, and mine, and hers ; it passes away every time that a human atom vanishes into the vast, every time that man, woman, or child, throughout this world, ceases to behold the sun. I am humanity. You are humanity. With every birth and death of every human soul it begins and it ends, and it is no more reasonable to speak of it as something organic, continuous, living, and life-giving, than it would be reasonable to compare momentary lightning-flashes of an angry night to the steadfast and profitable beauty of a day of sunshine. Humanity exists in and through the consciousness of each individual soul, and, except as a generalization useful for purposes of argument, humanity has no other existence.

Aug.—Ah ! that inextinguishable notion of the *individual* soul, the *individual* life ! At times it fills one with despair to realize the hold it still retains upon the best and noblest minds. It stands to reason that the magnificent conception of the *Grand Être* must be a stumbling-block to those who, do what they will, cannot rid themselves of the idea that the personal lot is all-important. There is every excuse for them. The religious history of the world, like that of each human being, is the history of the germination, the cradling, fostering, and maturing of this false principle of individualism. We were all of us brought up under its upas-shade. *Faire son salut*—this under one form or another, Catholic or Protestant, orthodox or schismatic, I care not, is the vampire which has sucked vitality from the creeds ; this it is which, under various disguises, still hinders even those who have abandoned them from grasping the worthier conception of a nobler age. The old theories are in our blood. With the best

will in the world, we cannot exorcise the lingering taint. The master himself recognized the slowness with which the substitution of the Deity Mankind for the Deity Self would be effected, and I suppose that here, above all, is required that tender patience with the fixity of tradition and the tenacity of prejudice, that holy power of quiet waiting until the ground is ripe for the seed of truth, which he so persistently enjoins and so beautifully exemplifies.

But to those who have risen to the height of his teaching, believe me, Humanity becomes the only reality. You speak of abstractions. To us, of course, it is the individual who is the abstraction, the race which is the only concrete fact. Hear Comte's own words (turn to page 246 of the *General View*): "It must not be supposed that the new Supreme Being is, like the old, merely a subjective result of our powers of abstraction. Its existence is revealed to us, on the contrary, by close investigation of objective fact. Man, indeed, as an individual, cannot properly be said to exist, except in the exaggerated abstractions of modern metaphysicians. Existence in the true sense can only be predicated of Humanity, although the complexity of her nature prevented men from forming a systematic conception of it, until the necessary stages of scientific initiation had been passed."

Aim.—That the importance of the individual has been unduly exaggerated under "theologism" is, I think, beginning to be universally recognized. But from this to the annihilation, the extinction of the individual by Positivism is a far cry. If orthodoxy has erred on the one side, Positivism, so it seems to me, has fallen into more serious error on the other.

Aug.—Give me that other book under your hand, “The Life of George Eliot,” and let me show you the kind of fruit that is borne by this “serious error,” this “extinction of the individual.” The grand woman, some imperfect reflex of whose inner life we have here, was, it is true, not outwardly a member of our communion, but at heart she was one of us. Her writings teem with Positivist truth. One of them, the “Spanish Gypsy,” has been aptly described as “a mass of Positivism.” See, Aimée, how this superb genius, yet most tender, most lovable of women, applies the new teaching in daily life. “I try,” she writes to a friend, “to delight in the sunshine that will be when I shall never see it any more. And I think it is possible for this sort of impersonal life to attain great intensity—possible for us to gain much more independence than is usually believed of the small bundle of facts that make our own personality.”

Aim.—At the risk of your thinking me very obtuse, or very impracticable, I must confess to you that I see nothing in that melancholy passage but the weariful endeavour of a heavy-laden heart to drag itself up to a viewpoint forced, or supposed to be forced, upon the intellect. The hope of a future state once definitely abandoned, a loving heart, whether of man or woman, takes no *real* delight in the sunshine, present or future, that illumines—merely graves. But of this more anon. To return to our immediate point, the possibility of getting rid of the very sense of our own personality. Let me, too, make my meaning clearer with the help of a passage from George Eliot’s Life. (I put the book out to-day, because it seemed to me better fitted to serve as a text-book for to-day’s subject than the works of Comte himself.) The passage I mean (page 303 of the third

volume) struck me a good deal as an apt illustration of this very tendency of Positivism, the too-great sinking of personality, the exaggeration of altruism, the carrying self-abnegation to the verge of a *reductio ad absurdum*. Speaking of the false representations of her views which she had to endure, George Eliot says, "I don't really love any gentleman who undertakes to state my opinions well enough to desire that I should find myself all wrong in order to justify his statement." I find much unintended significance in this half-jesting remark. It exposes better than an elaborate argument could do the consequences of the exaggeration I complain of. It marks the point beyond which altruism retires, and egoism, or rather right, wholesome, human individuality imperiously and unanswerably asserts itself. It would be a travesty of unselfishness to wish an inept reviewer right for his greater satisfaction. It is no less a travesty of disinterestedness to "try to delight" in the beauty and glory which will be—not merely non-existent for ourselves, but only torturing to other human atoms like ourselves.

Aug.—Why torturing? You speak as though mankind, in all ages, had had a fixed belief in the immortality of the soul, as if they were now to be suddenly robbed of an immemorial and universal possession. Yet this doctrine, so far from being inherent in our nature, or universally diffused throughout the world, is one of slow and gradual growth, and one which many highly civilized nations and individuals have either not held at all, or held in some vague, mythic form utterly aloof from and without influence upon daily life. The noblest actions have been done, the grandest ideas conceived, the deepest enthusiasms felt by men who had either aban-

doned the notion of or else had never heard of any other existence than this. To go no further than those old Hebrew saints and prophets upon whose histories you and I were nourished, what but the faintest glimmer had they of any other future than the future of their race, of their state, of that Jerusalem for whose peace they were ready to sacrifice their own personality to the uttermost, to face unpopularity, and contempt, and captivity, and death?

Aim.—My answer is, that arguments drawn from the half-unconscious heroisms of the childhood and youth of the world do not apply to the later, more matured stages of its growth. Whatever may have been the case in the past; granting that the future hope has been held only partially and in the most distorted—often the most repulsive—forms, up to the present; granting also that men have lived glorious lives and died glorious deaths without it; I still maintain that we men and women of the present cannot surrender it without surrendering all that makes life heroic, all that makes life worth living. It may very well be that we have but just now (as it were) attained to it in a wholly worthy shape, purged it of all self-interest, purified it of all superstition. I think that this is so. I think that until “In Memoriam” was written, there was no clear exposition of the “larger hope” of which I speak, the hope which accepts, nay, embraces, all the (proven) conclusions of modern thought, all the discoveries of science, all the side-lights of criticism, yet inscribes upon its banner, in the name of reason itself, an emphatic—“*No surrender.*”

However this may be, one thing is certain. We have become self-conscious. It is too late to go back to childhood. Our eyes, like Eve’s in Paradise, have been

opened. The knowledge of good and evil—the good of a life, however full of mysterious pain, to which there exists somewhere *a key*; the evil of a life, however noble and happy, *which is all*—this knowledge *has come to us*, and it is a knowledge which can never be unlearned.

Aug.—What of the great men and women of the *present*, indefatigable workers, magnanimous souls, who have renounced this hope, whether in its old theological garb, or in its “purified,” modernized form? What of men like Professor Clifford, of women like Harriet Martineau?

Aim.—In the answer which I shall presently make to that question lies the secret of half the pain which has disturbed and bewildered you. I prefer to return to it by and by. I should like now to explain to you a little more fully, with the help of this deeply significant—to my mind deeply tragic—“Life,” some expressions of mine which (so you seemed to think) called for some further elucidation. I said that I feared the renunciation of the “larger hope” would ultimately paralyze action. I also said that, in the long run, it would make the higher life, the life “in the Whole, the Good, the Beautiful,” impossible. I said, moreover, that it threatened the existence of the very pivot of the universe—of love itself. I have now to substantiate these charges. First, then, as to the Positivist, or, in other terms (though I know the word is ill-sounding in Positivist ears), the materialist view interfering with action. My point is this. As soon as a race or an individual becomes conscious, as soon as men leave off acting from mere animal instinct or irrational impulse, as soon as they cease to be naïf and become reflective—we find the same question perpetually recurring, “*Is it worth while?*” We

find a nice calculation of consequences, a balancing of effort with result, an examination of mental levers, so to speak, with a view to discover whether they are really equal to the strain put upon them. Action is no longer swift like a child's feet, spontaneous like a bird's song. It has become a measured, reasoned thing. Strong, definite, rational motive is wanted to set the human machinery in motion at all, and that which once went of itself, so to speak, now requires an engine of fifty philosopher-power to make it budge.

Aug.—You are not, of course, speaking of the lower kinds of action, of the struggle for subsistence, for example, or the pursuit of petty ambition and all the selfish ideals which absorb the attention and engross the lives of most men? It seems to me that Egotism will always supply sufficient motive-power for these.

Aim.—I am not sure that even selfishness will not become sensible of a diminution of motive-force, once it has clearly realized its own mortality. But of course I am speaking mainly of what concerns us most just now, the higher branches of human effort, life for others, disinterested work, all that we mean by the word altruism. I think it is mainly here that the danger which John Stuart Mill foresaw, the danger of "*the disastrous feeling of not worth while*" creeping over the minds of men (stripped of the future hope), is to be dreaded. The process may be a gradual one, and, except individuals living and unborn, but I hold that *ultimately* and *generally* this "disastrous feeling" will paralyze altruistic effort. How can it, logically, be otherwise? Our sympathy for others is born of our own experience, and if our own experience demonstrates that the life which finishes in the grave is a mockery, an absurdity how

shall we affect to prize it for others? George Eliot writes to Mrs. Stowe that she believes "a religion more perfect than any yet prevalent must express less care for personal consolation, and a more deeply awing sense of responsibility to man, springing from sympathy with that *which of all things is most certainly known to us*, the difficulty of the human lot." Good. That is most true, and very nobly said. But if our pity for our fellow-men be indeed based, as she admits, upon self-pity; if it is our own intimate sense of the "difficulty of the human lot" which is to fill us with the "awing sense of responsibility to man" that she desiderates, then surely we shall end by crediting other men with our own supreme "difficulty," the difficulty, namely, of caring one iota for "the life of the fly and the worm." And we shall abandon the pretence—forgive me, Austin, I can call it no other—the pretence of holding that to be "worth while" for them which we have discovered to be eminently not worth while for ourselves. A little happiness, more or less; a little comfort, more or less; a little dignity and nobleness, more or less; do these things signify more for them than for us, all alike disfranchised, disinherited, discrowned; all alike indifferent to the pains that death will quiet; all alike contemptuous of the joys that pass like shadows?

Aug.—To the Positivist there will always be motive in the thought of the Great Being, in the conception of a race concerned, not so much with joys and pains, as with the impersonal life, with constant endeavour to ameliorate the lot of others, to dignify existence, and make it—with all its drawbacks and limitations—a boon, and not a curse to posterity.

Aim.—And yet, is there not in some sections of

the Positivist body itself at the present time a certain disinclination to vigorous action, an almost apathetic spirit of *laissez-faire*, a tendency to watch the game as spectators, rather than join in it as actors, which seems to make for my view? I was speaking the other day on the subject with a distinguished Professor at one of our universities. He told me that he had been struck with the failure to make any decided mark of a little knot of Comtists who, years ago, at college, had given promise of exceptional careers. He seemed to see the secret of their failure to redeem this promise in this very want of motive power. One of them had been down shortly before, he told me, to his own university, in order to feel its pulse in relation to Positivism; but he had made no proselytes—apparently had cared to make none. It was against his principles, he told my friend, to sow dissension in families by persuading young men to embrace opinions repugnant to their parents, and possibly subversive of filial duty! What is this but weakness of motive force? Depend upon it, when a religion moves as gingerly as this, when it becomes too scrupulous to cry aloud and spare not, too “*relative*” to follow in the footsteps of the prophets who came not to bring peace but a sword, the day is not far distant when it will languish from sheer inanition and die of its own delicacy.

And hear George Eliot, of whom you tell me that she was essentially, though not outwardly, a Positivist, and whom you regard as the mouthpiece of many of your characteristic doctrines. “For a long while to come,” she writes to a Positivist, Mrs. Congreve, “I suppose human energy will be greatly taken up *with resignation rather than action.*” Personally, I do not

understand how, on your hypothesis, human energy can be taken up with anything at all *except* resignation—unless, indeed, it be with revolt!

Aug.—George Eliot, I imagine, refers to that period of transition which we are well aware that men must pass through before they bring themselves to accept the inevitable with a good grace. To this transition 'state, between the casting off of fictitious hopes and beliefs and the adoption of a nobler religion, based on demonstrable truth, is owing (so we hold) much of the *malaise*, the morbid, feverish unrest of the present day. But the process has to be gone through. Before we can hope to modify the existing order to any purpose, we must accept it. We must clearly recognize that the laws which govern the universe are immutable and inexorable (though susceptible of modification), and we must be submissive before we can hope to be serviceable. I thank—Comte that I have done with that miserable novitiate. I am resigned to all, which, as it unhappily appears to you, renders existence valueless. And so far from being sensible of any undermining in myself of the springs of action, I find my supreme happiness in such poor efforts as I am able to make in the service of Humanity. Everything appears to me better worth while than before. I am no longer cramped and fettered by the dread of hell, no longer paralyzed by the absence of belief in anything at all. Action has motive, abundant motive, for me. Humble though my share may be in the raising of that great fabric of the future of which my labours will represent but, as it were, the smallest fraction of the smallest stone, it is enough for me to know that I have a share in it. It is happiness enough to have left the petty, anxious,

isolated life behind, and to be daily and hourly sensible of the corporate life, to feel the mighty heart-beats of that mighty Being, of which I am content to be *an organ*, and to which I am proud to dedicate all I have and all I am. Is not this the "higher life," that very life in the Whole, the Good, the Beautiful, which, but now, you declared to be impossible on Positivist terms?

Aim.—Again I must remind you of the qualification I made in asserting its impossibility. I said nothing of the immediate present, nothing of individuals, merely that in general, and in the long run, not action merely, but character, will suffer from the renunciation of the hope of immortality.

And character will suffer for the simple reason that in future the keynote of character will be—must inevitably be—perpetual sadness. A settled pessimism, compared with which the pessimism of Schopenhauer and Hartmann will show like faith itself, will not merely cut the ground from altruism, from humanitarian effort, but will invade the sanctuary of men's hearts and consciences, and, by withering hope, will render the inward beauty of holiness—the essence of the higher life—impossible. That disinterested pursuit of Truth, Knowledge, Science, which, it has been justly pleaded, should be recognized as religion (Goethe's life *im Ganzen*); that lofty morality and devotion to the right, that unselfish sacrifice of time, health, wealth to others, in which (we are told) his life "*im Guten*" consists; that passionate worship of Beauty, that "Higher Paganism" which absorbs so much of what is best in modern life, and which corresponds to the life "*im Schönen*;" how shall it be possible "resolutely to live" this triple life, or to live any part of it—*without hope*?

Aug.—I have reiterated sufficiently often that for the Positivist hope will not be extinct. His un murmuring acquiescence in the laws that govern the universe will not hinder him from looking forward to an altered, a bettered world, in which, through the heroic labour and self-devotion of generations of men, even what you have called “the life of the fly and the worm” may end by being worth having to other men. It is true that his character may become chastened by his resignation to the inevitable limitations of existence; his enthusiasm may be tempered, and his emotions calmed and subdued; he may learn to content himself with “the day of small things,” with those *menus plaisirs* of daily life which begin to assume their true value when we give up torturing ourselves with insoluble problems, with Titanic ambitions, and chimerical aspirations. But to say that he will be “without hope” is to mistake his mental condition altogether.

Aim.—I can hardly think so. His mental condition will, according to me, soon come to be summed up in the significant line which has been fitly chosen as the motto for this instructive “Life”:

“*Our finest hope is finest memory.*”

In other words, hope, in the ordinary acceptation of the word, will become practically non-existent for him, as it became practically non-existent for the subject of this memoir. In studying these letters with the close and reverent attention which they must command from all thinking beings—especially from women—nothing has impressed itself on my mind with more painful clearness than this fact, that, whilst retaining the use of the word hope, the writer of them had definitively taken

leave of the thing. Those tragic words on the title-page wail to me, between the lines, on every succeeding page of the book, and for all their high-sounding eloquence, and for all the laborious efforts of the tender-hearted genius to persuade herself that they contain the very balm of Gilead, you can see that, in truth, for her, as for me, as for tens of thousands of her readers, present and future, they are not more comforting, soothing, or inspiring, than the passing bell. For see: to say that *memory* is *hope* is to say that looking back is looking forward, that the past is the future, that we have already had that for lack of which we are ready to perish. It is more than a paradox; it is a contradiction in terms; it is, in fact, the surrender of hope altogether, the total extinction of that by which, as Paul declared, with intimate truth, two thousand years ago, "we are saved." Away with the word hope, if this mockery is all that is to be given us in its name! "Hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" I wish for no better answer to the astounding assertion that memory is hope, than that of Paul's: "*Hope that is seen is not hope.*"

Aug.—Are you not dissecting an epigram somewhat mercilessly?

Aim.—I am merely analyzing the philosophy which it reflects. And I do not think that I do that philosophy less than justice when I assert it to be one which refines away the element of hope altogether, which entirely eliminates hope from the sum of mental conditions. "I understand your paradox of expecting disappointments," writes George Eliot to Miss Hennell, "*for that is the only form of hope with which I am familiar.*"

Aug.—I think you should quote, as a set-off against

those words, written probably in one of those seasons of depression that come to us all, this other letter to the same friend: "You and I are alike in this, that we can get no good out of pretended comforts which are the devices of self-love, but would rather, in spite of pain, grow into the endurance of all 'naked truths.'" Or this letter to Mrs. Peter Taylor: "It seems to me pre-eminently desirable that we should learn not to make our personal comfort a standard of truth."

Aim.—Is not this begging the question? I have not denied to Positivism, or to George Eliot and her school (that school of what I would call informal Positivism, which, as I told you yesterday, appears to me to be influencing thought so powerfully at the present time), a determined resolve to avert as far as possible the ravages of pessimism upon action and character. I find in many Positivist and *quasi*-Positivist thinkers a spirit of quiet persistence in well-doing, of calm submission to the death-in-life which is all their gruesome creed has left them, of patient "endurance of naked truths," which is nothing less than heroic. What I do say is that, notwithstanding this Spartan and often truly admirable attitude of mind, I can detect (and nowhere more plainly than in this biography) the insidious approaches of another spirit, which is destined, according to me, ultimately to supersede it. I said the "insidious approaches." And truly the spectre is cloaked from head to foot, and often its draperies are fair, and are called submission, and resignation, and endurance, and manly calm. But it is a spectre after all; a spectre with relentless feet, and grisly countenance, and a most firm and fatal grip; and its name is—*Despair*.

Oh, believe me, Austin, it is happiness, not resignation, that is the fountain of life, happiness that spurs to unselfish labour, happiness that sweetens character and keeps it lofty and lovely and holy. "Resignation" will never do the work of happiness, upon which the foundations of the earth were fastened, when it was ordained that gladness, and not "submission," should herald all creation, while the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy. *Happiness, Hope*—these are the two watchwords for the present and the future, for this life and the next, by which we live; and let no man think that the two watchwords of Positivism, *Resignation, Memory*—Resignation for this life, Memory for all that remains of the next—can be substituted for them without the gravest and most momentous results.

* * * * *

Aug.—There is an answer to all this. But before I remind you of it, finish your impeachment of the Positivist immortality. Speak to me of love, Aimée. Tell me why you reiterate that our theory endangers love—you who, two days ago, pronounced the crowning merit of Positivism to be the "sovereignty" it confers on feeling, on love; you who so generously and so eloquently recognized the primary aim of our founder to be a life which shall be one long act of worship, "*performed under the inspiration of universal Love.*"

Aim.—To that well-merited tribute I unreservedly adhere. But, recollect, we dwelt purposely, in our first talk, on the best aspects, or what appeared to me to be the best aspects, of Comte's system. Our business is

now with the other side of the shield. And—I would give all I have not to have to say this to you, Austin—and it most unhappily appears to me to be indisputable that that which your founder gives you with one hand—in this matter of loyalty to love—he takes away with the other. . . . It is hard for me to speak of this. . . . I can but repeat to you my own unalterable conviction that the man who divests love of immortality signs the death-warrant of love, here as well as hereafter, and, in my poor judgment, at least, pleads guilty to *crimen læsæ majestatis*. The grieved, maimed, evanescent, dishonoured thing that remains when the eternal hope is gone is not *love*; it is the phantom of love; it is an insult to the understanding of man, and it is an outrage to his heart. Of all the futile imaginings, all the contemptible, ant-like preoccupations of the pigmy, man (shorn of the only element which affords colourable pretext for his existence—the element of everlastingness)—all

“the philosophies, all the sciences, poesy, varying voices of prayer,”

this thing that he still proposes to call *love* will be the most futile, the most contemptible, the most illusory, for once it was the monarch and arbiter of all, and in proportion to its greatness will be the terror of its degradation, the catastrophe of its fall.

But here, . . . at this crisis of our destinies, . . . let me speak only for myself, Austin. . . . I, at least, will have none of a love which is professedly for this life only; or, if you will, for some shadowy, fanciful, “subjective” prolongation of this life in the possible memory of others which, to my thinking, can only serve to throw dust in the eyes of feeling and reasoning beings. . . .

Aug.—These are terrible words. . . . Can it be that the unaltered, the unalterable devotion of years is not proof enough—

Aim.—Austin! Austin! Thou hast despised mine holy things. . . . Pity me. It will go harder with me than with you.

Aug.—This is not final? You will not be yourself so pitiless as to tell me that this is final?

Aim.—I will not say so to-day, since you will not have me say so. But I fear—I fear that you yourself can come to no other conclusion, when you have reflected a little. However, we will leave that now. Let us endeavour now to be as *impersonal* as we may!

Aug.—Again that terrible smile, Aimée—

Aim.—Let us try to finish what we have in hand. I wanted to prove to you, from this record of a noble, but hopeless, life, what a mere simulacrum that love of one to one which is the glorious type of all other love, becomes, once it has acquiesced in its own practical extinction by death. But, first of all, I shall read you an eloquent tribute to this love from George Eliot's greatest work, asking you especially to note the tragic anti-climax with which the glowing picture ends. "What greater thing," she asks in "Adam Bede," "what greater thing is there for two human souls than to feel that they are joined for life—to strengthen each other in all labour, to rest on each other in all sorrow, to minister to each other in all pain—to *be one with each other in silent unspeakable memories at the moment of the last parting?*" *One with each other in unspeakable memories.* Is this all? Is this the end? this the goal? this the consummation? Austin! think you there would be much comfort here

at the moment of the "*last parting*" — the "*last parting*" ?

Aug.—I confess I find a beauty in manful resignation, and I can understand a holy consolation springing (when the first natural burst of grief is over) from a sacred memory.

Aim.—Have you forgotten what you yourself wrote to me but a few months since, when my mother's death left me alone in the world? "*To speak to you of resignation*"—oh! I have not forgotten the very words!—" *must seem to you an outrage to your beloved.*" That letter was a presage of what was to come. It filled me with a blank foreboding which has never since been wholly stifled. It went on to speak of the happiness which in course of time I should derive from holy memories of the dead. And I tried to find some comfort in it because—because—I loved you; but, with the light of what has happened since shed on them, your words come back to me with new meaning, and hurt me like swords. Austin, the man who could write *so* at such a time is a man who has never known love as I understand it, who is probably incapable of dimly apprehending what I mean by the word love, and who, most certainly, has never felt for me the thousandth part of what—Heaven help me!—I have felt for him.

But let that pass. Listen to the way in which this theory about memories being enough at the supreme moment of parting is applied in the writer's life. "Our unspeakable joy in each other," she says in one place, "has no other alloy than the sense that it must one day end in parting." In another: "The approach of parting is the bitterness of age." In another: "As soon as one has found the key of life, 'it opes the gates of death'!"

I find nothing here about the "greatness" of being one with each other in memories at the last; I find nothing but the simple human terror of a final separation, nothing but natural human grief over the tragedy of love's ending.

But the worst is that disbelief in love's eternity not only overshadows, maims, belittles love during the beloved one's life, but causes—must cause even in the finest natures—treachery to love after the final parting. I know of nothing sadder in the whole range of literary biography than the story of how the *memory* of a life-long union, which she herself describes as one of "*unspeakable joy*," failed to afford the survivor one solitary gleam of solace or succour. He, the comrade, the burden-bearer, the beloved of thirty years, has joined the choir invisible; but not an echo of his voice reaches the solitude he has left, not a note of that glad chorale that is to save humanity sounds audibly enough to keep one woman's heart from breaking. And so, in her awful loneliness and unutterable despair, she turns elsewhere for consolation. Why should she be true to love and to him? Why should she wait, as some wait, to rejoin him? as—to take a signal instance—two beloved and great poets are waiting at this moment to become one again, the one here with us, the other *beyond*? She believes in no reunion. She even hopes for none. Hope is extinct. The very *memory* which is all the hope she knows is powerless to sustain her; powerless even—if we may trust her own words—to keep her nature tender and sweet. "I had been conscious," she writes to Mrs. Congreve, apologizing, as it were, for her second union, "of a certain drying up of tenderness in me." Again, she says, "I think I should have become" (in solitude) "very selfish. To feel daily the loveliness of *a nature close to me*, and to

feel grateful for it, is the fountain of tenderness and strength to endure." Note—a nature. *He* is gone, and since he can be no longer *close to her*, there must be another. It is almost as though any nature would do, provided it be near at hand, quite near, not parted from her by—a grave's length. Now, for me, this is tragedy, and it is treason—treason to Love who is and was my lord and king.

And when I think that those words were uttered by the writer of the great Positivist hymn which magnifies in the stately yet impassioned language of a solemn enthusiasm your "subjective immortality;" when I remember that George Eliot is an acknowledged priestess—not of formal Positivism—but of all that is most distinctive, and all that is most essential in your doctrines; when I find permeating her works those two notes of a large section of modern thought—sinking of the supernatural, enthusiasm of humanity—which are also the characteristic notes of the religion adopted by my betrothed, I say to myself, "And *this—this* is the end!" . . .

You are silent. Was there not something you had to say? some general answer to my threefold objection to the Comtist attenuation of immortality?

Aug.—I had to say merely this. What about *the fact*? What if the assumption upon which our theory is built (that there can be no future life other than subjective) be *the truth*? What if, when all *à priori* arguments have been exhausted, and all sentimental—pass me the word—all sentimental objections given their full weight, the unanswerable verdict of exact knowledge be pronounced in favour of Positivism?

Aim.—I deny that it has been so pronounced.

“Thou canst not prove thou art immortal, no,
Nor yet that thou art mortal”—

would seem to be the last word of Science upon the subject.

Let me append to those words these other words of wisdom which follow them :

“Wherefore thou be wise,
 Cleave ever to the sunnier side of doubt,
 And cling to Faith beyond the forms of Faith !”

Aug.—You are really content with the negative mysticism of “In Memoriam” and “The Ancient Sage”?

Aim.—I find in these poems, and in others from the same pen, “Vastness,” “Wages,” and the rest, upon the whole, the truest exposition of what I take to be the real set of the *Zeitgeist* in this matter of immortality. No one sees more clearly than Tennyson the immense significance, the transcendent importance of the question whether or no individual human consciousness be finally extinguished at death. He recognizes to the full the worse than valuelessness to the human race of life without the future hope ; he has a firm grasp of the truth, that, once it is definitively surrendered, mankind will have surrendered, not merely hope, but greatness ; not merely happiness, but all that sanctifies, all that ennobles, all that differentiates man from the brute. And, following him and the handful of other writers in verse and prose who (so it seems to me) are really in touch with the age-soul in this matter, men who delight in inquiry, who revere science, who take count of materialism, and yet dare to cherish a hope which inquiry cannot demonstrate, which science ignores, and materialism contemns—following these courageous thinkers, I refuse to listen to any plea for human life stripped of the hope

of immortality. My final answer to your "What about *the fact*? what if annihilation be *the truth*?" is this: "If you are right, *if* there is no future life, *if* death is the end, and the magician's palace which Positivism has woven out of the fond, illusory hopes of mankind, and called 'subjective immortality,' *is all*, then the sooner our most unhappy race is brought to an end the better. Then let universal sorrow reign, and the very sky become a pall, and the joy of life and labour and love go out in blackness of darkness. Away with the mockery of content, with the imposture of cheerfulness under such a doom! Away with the flimsy substitute which a mock religion offers to a deluded race in place of its best, its only true possession! If we are indeed, each one of us, not merely under sentence of death, but under sentence of everlasting nothingness, I, at least, will have none of a life so conditioned. I hold it unworthy of a thinking creature to affect satisfaction in existence on such terms, and I spurn the brief, the breathless instant given me here to wonder and to suffer in, not because it is agonizing, but because it is ignoble; not because it is a mystery, but because it is a fraud, an ill jest played by a power, blind or bad, on sensitive and reasoning beings."

And here I am reminded of one more hard saying that I must utter—we passed it by: it was in connection with those men and women of our own day, who, not unconsciously, like the Hebrew saints, not blindly, like the heroes of Greece and Rome, but of set purpose, and with open eyes, as it were, accept existence upon these degrading terms. Yes, you are right, they dignify existence too, these "indefatigable workers, magnanimous souls." And yet, in the most noble among them, in those who work best in their darkness, in those who

make the grandest fight with a Fate which they must hold devilish, did they not hold it irresponsible, I am sensible of a blank, a kind of moral want which pains me very exquisitely.

Aug.—That is easily explained. Many of these modern thinkers of whom you speak have cast off all religion. They are science mad, and they overlook the perennial needs of the human heart. They would leave man nothing to worship. Here is the supreme beauty of our faith. We do not crush these imperative instincts of the human soul which, in your own case, are revolted by the crude materialism that holds religion cheap and sets little store by love. On the contrary, we cherish and seek to develop them by supplying them with rational nourishment. We give to man a Supreme Being in whom he can believe, a worship to which his reason can assent, a moral code that he can enthusiastically obey. We also give him—I must say it, Aimée, for all the pathetic, often the most impressive eloquence of your impeachment of our doctrine—we also give him a grand and elevating and satisfying hope of immortality. . . .

Aim.—I will tell you of what this hope of yours reminds me. It reminds me of George Eliot's grave, as I saw it on Easter Eve. I was at Highgate Cemetery on Easter Eve. I had wandered away from my friends, who were taking sweet wreaths of spring flowers to the spot most sacred to them in all the earth. They wished, I thought, to be alone—to pray. And so I found myself alone too, standing by George Eliot's desolate grave. All around, the place was bright with Easter garlands; on her grave lay a handful—a small handful—of withered Lent lilies—nothing more. I thought of them just now, while you were speaking. As those poor perished flowers

(I thought) to the fresh, glorious flowers I saw near them, so is the hope she clung to, the hope of Positivism, to the hope I cherish, the hope of "In Memoriam." My heart was full of sadness then as I left her lying there, untended, so it seemed to me, unworshipped, as hope worships the dead. But I left her to come upon a sadder sight—the last resting-place of William Kingdon Clifford. This grave was more forsaken still. Three rose-trees had once been planted there, two at the head, one at the foot. Of these, two were, to all appearance, dead. One had a few leaves on it. That was all. No flowers growing; none brought by loving hands. And for comfort—upon the headstone—these words :

"I was not, and was conceived,
I loved and did a little work,
I am not, and grieve not."

Austin! do not think that I am judging this individual worker (and most patient sufferer) harshly if I tell you that that epitaph jarred me, morally. It is not difference of opinion that saddens me here. It is something deeper. In these thinkers who not merely—like George Eliot—try to believe that they believe this life, in itself, worth having, but *do* believe it, and actually parade their belief—in this "*I am not and grieve not*" of modern scepticism—I find evidence of something which I can only call moral deficiency. The defect I speak of may be latent in men like Clifford, in women like Harriet Martineau; but it is there. An instinct in me which I can trust tells me that their content with nothingness, their joy in annihilation, is a thing of evil, and will lead to evil. I do not care to contemplate the possible developments in the future of this false resignation, this unworthy surrender,

this unhuman jubilation. I repeat, I would judge no one individually. But I take leave to dread this tendency of our day as I dread wrong, to shrink from it, as I shrink from sin. I have found, from experience, that I can rely upon these intuitions. Despise me, if you must, . . .

And, Austin, forgive me if you can; for I can recognize no such distinction as you would draw between materialists and Positivists, between those who care for no future life at all and those who content themselves with "subjective immortality." In both I find something which shocks my moral sense, something which pains and angers me as a human being, . . . something which has made me feel that . . . to-day . . . I ought . . . to bid you good-bye, Austin. . . .

Oh, my dear, my dear! when I leave you at the last, my grave will be neglected too, like that grave. . . . Whereas my love, my husband—must. . . . Oh, I would have my grave like another grave I saw that day. It was next to that forsaken one. Did I say a grave? It was not a grave. It was a garden—an exquisitely-ordered garden—tulips blooming, and wallflowers budding, and sweet, tender bits of greenery opening to the spring sunshine. A woman lies there, and some one—perhaps her husband—has written as a memorial of her—

"She lived and loved—she lives and loves."

*THE EXTENSION OF THE LAW OF
KINDNESS: BEING AN ESSAY ON
THE RIGHTS OF ANIMALS.*


"Rights are attributes of Persons. Animals are not Persons ; they are, so far as the question of Rights is concerned, Things. . . . We cannot speak of the Rights of Animals without forfeiting all the exactness of expression which the Doctrine of Rights requires."

WHEWELL'S ELEMENTS OF MORALITY.

"There was a time, erstwhile, when might was right,
And after that a time when right was right,
But now is Pity risen from the dead,
And now is weakness right and ignorance,
And dumbness and the need of helpless things.
Beasts have no rights? Once men had none who dwelt
In thralldom—women have none now—the brutes
Have, or shall have them, if, at last, we learn
To measure rights by our desire to give,
And not by others greediness to claim,
Or tongue to ask, or might to seize and hold."



THE EXTENSION OF THE LAW OF KINDNESS.

N one of the most powerful and most pathetic of his "Ballads," Lord Tennyson makes a materialist surgeon, fresh from continental cynicism and "liberty of unlicensed" physiological experiment, assert that it is

"All very well, but the good Lord Jesus has had His day."

To which his interlocutor, the gentle Sister of the hospital ward, in whom the most heartrending of occupations has not checked for an instant the flow of her pity, nor the repulsiveness of her surroundings dimmed the brightness of her hope, replies with womanly indignation that, so far from having had it, the day of the Lord Jesus is a thing which is yet to come, a thing which, in fact, has scarcely yet begun to dawn upon the world. And if we interpret the "day of the good Lord

Jesus" to mean the day of practical, as distinguished from dogmatic Christianity; if we interpret it to mean the predominance of goodness over theological opinion, and of holy living over religious observance; if we understand by the phrase the reign of righteousness and temperance, of unselfishness and of purity, of a humanity such as is breathed in the Sermon on the Mount, and a loving-kindness such as that which kindles in the writings of John the divine—then, we must surely all be agreed that the "day of the good Lord Jesus" is a day which is not yet.

As things are at present, there are times when the coming of such a glorious epoch, the doing away with the reign of selfishness and cruelty, and the establishment of the reign of goodness and mercy, seems more than ever remote. Looking at the results of modern educational systems at home and abroad, we are fain to admit that they are not entirely satisfactory to those to whom the advancement of such a peaceable kingdom of righteousness seems the one thing needful. For the tendency of modern education would seem increasingly to be to develop the intellectual faculties only, leaving what used to be called the spiritual faculties—what we may, perhaps, still designate, in the broadest sense of the term, the religious faculties—to take care of themselves. Science, avenging herself for ages of neglect, is rapidly taking possession of the field which clericalism is as rapidly vacating; Art, in reaction from the short-sighted restrictions of Puritanism, is arrogating an exaggerated importance; everywhere Intellect is supreme; and the cultivation of the mind is being vigorously pushed forward. On the other hand, the cultivation of the heart, the true education, or drawing out of the character, of

those higher and finer aspects of a man's nature which can be gauged by no scientific instrument, nor tested by any known form of examination; the right developing of such instincts as the craving for the absolute, the desire for self-sacrifice, the hunger for the ideal—all this is omitted from our educational schemes, and left to the chance influences of independent "religious" instruction, out of which nearly everything deserving the name of religion has disappeared. From our Board Schools up to our Universities the secular spirit holds sway, the old theological forms in many instances surviving indeed, but surviving merely as forms, hollow relics of a bygone time when they embodied the most integral beliefs, the most vital, most awful convictions of individual and national life.

No doubt such a condition of things was unavoidable. A religion that had ceased to be believed must fall into decay, and could retain no real grasp upon national education, nor other than the merest external and formal relation to the national life. No real lover of truth or believer in progress could wish that it should be otherwise; nay, with many, the very natural and laudable desire is that the scales of superstition should fall less gradually from our timid eyes, and that we should more willingly and courageously surrender, along with our worn-out beliefs, ceremonial practices which have lost their meaning and conventional phraseology which is no longer sincere. Admitting all this, it is, at the same time, impossible to look around—especially if we include in the survey those continental nations where secular education on the modern theory has advanced further than with ourselves—and not to tremble, lest, in rooting up the tares, we do not incur some danger of

rooting up the wheat also. What if, with us, as with them, theological belief be eradicated, to give place not to purer devotion, not to holier zeal, not to nobler aspiration, but merely to a superficial and strictly negative atheism, to a thin cynicism and thinner materialism which believes in nothing, which hopes for nothing, which adores nothing, and which culminates at last in men like Tennyson's vivisectionists, who

“would break their jests on the dead,
And mangle the living dog that had loved him and fawned at
his knee.”

Under the old systems, imperfect as they were, men were kept in check, if not always by rational love, at least by wholesome fear of a Power in the main righteous and just, as well as omniscient and omnipotent; they at least believed—not with the lips, but with the heart—in a scheme of future rewards and punishments for deeds of self-denial and charity, or of self-indulgence and cruelty done in the body; they held that utterances like “Love your enemies,” or “Blessed are the merciful,” or “Except ye become as little children,” were indeed divine, not in a merely literary, but in the plainest literal sense, and if they did not always exemplify such teaching in their lives, they sinned against it with the wilful defiance of the conscious offender, not with the jaunty indifference of the sceptic who has divested himself of veneration as well as of superstition, and cast off not merely outward forms, but inward graces, not merely the law of priests, but the law of God. Under the old systems, too, there was a certain scope for men's ideal faculties; there was food for the imagination; there was room for the fancy, sustenance for the enthusiasm,

sanction for the hope. And delusive though we may hold the devout imaginings, enthusiasms, hopes, of the old world to have been, still the undoubted fact remains that they soothed and they satisfied instincts of human nature which are at least as deep-seated as the demand for truth and the craving for knowledge ; that they gave free play to—let the word pass till a better be found—the infinite in man, that they justified his pity, transfigured his affections, gave validity to his heroism, put inspiration into his life. What have we to offer, what has the cultus of Intellect, the gospel of Science, nay, the very religion of Humanity itself (in the wider sense) to offer in their place ?

The question is one of deep importance, and one which, in various forms, is coming rapidly into prominence. It does not fall within the scope of this essay to discuss it in any detail, but in putting together a few thoughts upon the relation of man to the brutes, with especial reference to the right of inflicting suffering upon them, it seemed impossible to omit some preliminary mention of that growing tendency to disregard suffering, to discard moral authority, and to proclaim each man a law unto himself, which is a product of materialist modes of thought, and of purely secular systems of education in the present day. Whether we regard the change from the point of view of a sanguine belief in the future, or from that of a regretful distrust, we must all be agreed as to the fact of its existence ; nor can those who are in any degree alive to what is passing around them fail to have noted some very evident tokens—even amongst ourselves—of an increasing retrogression to unreligious, not to say unscrupulous, opinions and procedure. This tendency was well described by the Bishop of Oxford in a recent

address at a public meeting as one "which he watched with sadness everywhere to revert to earlier and more brutal methods against what he thought had been the glad and distinguishing mark of this generation—against the tendency to give all the weak their rights, and to introduce the principle of tender consideration into human feelings everywhere."

Among many instances of this reactionary tendency, two or three may be cited as examples before we come to the special instance which is the subject of this paper. The curious political growth—in a professedly Christian country—known as Jingoism, is perhaps one of the most salient of existing proofs, either that the Founder of Christianity has not yet "had his day," or that "Christian" nations are, indeed, reverting to pagan creeds and practice. For Jingoism is, in substance, nothing but the national revolt against a desire to make Christianity international—in other words, "to give all the weak"—nations as well as individuals—their rights, and to introduce the principle of tender consideration into human feelings *everywhere*, into our dealings with dark-skinned races as well as white, and with peoples of imperfect, as well as—save the mark!—advanced civilization. The resolve to maintain the right of the stronger, the vulgar love of national prestige, the aggressive self-assertion, the barbaric complacency in bloodshed, veiled by a transparently insincere disclaimer of the wish for it—what is all this but Paganism, the true *secular* spirit which sees nothing beyond the *seculum*, and will hear of no "kingdom of heaven," of no ideal greater than its own ambitions and sweeter than its own self-satisfaction?

Again, there is the growing tyranny of the Democracy, forgetful of that high mission which it was given neither

to kings nor to nobles nor to philosophers, but only to the mighty universal heart of the People to fulfil, and itself working its own undoing by helping to crush the individual and to set up a new despotism worse than those which once it contemned. Under this new despotism, so far from giving "all the weak their rights," the weak go to the wall more effectually than under any preceding one, for instead of falling victims here and there to the chance caprices of a tyrant or the localized selfishness of a caste, they are caught up with organized regularity into the maw of the great, all-devouring bureaucratic machine, which knows no distinction of persons, which respects no individualities, recognizes no griefs, but works on with the remorseless automatic calm of an irresponsible force of nature. What can be more opposed to those humaner methods which we are accustomed to identify with the name of the Democrat of Galilee, which we had begun to look upon as an indispensable note of all true civilizations? Are we not indeed receding from all that the truest apostles of a sanctified liberty have preached, from the Son of the carpenter down to Joseph Mazzini, with his glorious dictum that liberty means "not merely energy of resistance to every false or unjust authority, but due reverence for the sole legitimate and true authority, that of virtue crowned by genius"?

Once more, in the treatment of women—in the attitude so largely adopted by men even of just and magnanimous temperament towards the movement which seeks to remove its grievous civil and social disabilities from half the human race—have we not melancholy proof that the "distinguishing mark of this generation" is *not* to "introduce the principle of tender con-

sideration into human feelings everywhere"? Alas! it would seem that it is rather to stunt and to repress it. For, in this obstinate opposition to political enfranchisement, to professional advancement, to the demand for the higher educational diplomas, for greater industrial facilities, and for a reasonable social independence, on the part of women, some of the noblest and most intimate of human feelings are daily set at nought to an extent which is not sufficiently realized. Forty years ago the great Italian patriot, quoted above, pointed out to his countrymen that it was inevitable the emancipation of woman should be linked with the emancipation of the people, otherwise the great principle of the unity of the human family could never be established, "for at the present day that half of it from which we seek both inspiration and consolation, that half to which the first education of childhood is entrusted, is, by a singular contradiction, declared civilly, politically, and socially unequal, and excluded from the great Unity." That exclusion still holds, after well-nigh half a century, and still men fail to comprehend its injustice or to realize its impolicy; still they seek to liberate the slave abroad, the peasant at home, and do not see that there are human beings higher in the scale whose better natures they are warping, whose fruitful aspirations they are stultifying, and whose cup of suffering they are filling to the brim through oppression, affliction, and wrong.

Again, the return to the use of weapons in every-day life—the revolver bidding fair to become to all classes of society what the sword was not many generations since to the gentleman and the dagger to the bravo; the recrudescence of prize-fighting; the facile recourse to explosives and deadly chemical agents of all kinds for

purposes of personal as well as political vengeance—these and many other symptoms of reviving savagery may well inspire “sadness” in those whose mission it is to proclaim peace on earth, or whose prayer it is that the kingdoms of the world may become the kingdoms of the Good, and of a calmed, ennobled, and purified humanity.

Abroad, however, the outlook with regard to progress along those good lines, shadowed forth by Christianity, and ever attaining fresh development in the hearts of the wise and the righteous, is still more discouraging. There we see the worst forms of the slavery of woman flourishing in unchecked luxuriance; we see the press gagged, and patriotism a crime to be expiated by torture and death; we see a literature of the gutter and a drama nine-tenths corrupt sapping the manhood of a whole people; we see human life stripped of its sacredness, and society returning to a primitive lawlessness of personal revenge; we see the elaborate dissection of living animals not defended apologetically upon grounds of necessity and utility, but openly gloried in as an absorbing art, beautiful to witness and delightful to practise.

This last phenomenon brings us to the proper subject of these remarks, the question of our relation to the brute creation, of their rights, if any, with regard to us, and of our duties, if any, with regard to them; whether the attitude of the modern world towards them is one which is, upon the whole, sound and justifiable; or whether it calls for grave modification in more than one particular.

In considering this question we are not materially helped by the moral philosophers. Turning to *Whe-well's “Elements of Morality,”* we find the astounding statement—proving how logic may obscure truth, and

the skill of the metaphysician give the lie to the man's best instincts—that "animals can have no rights." A more recent authority, Professor Fowler, in his "Progressive Morality," would seem to uphold this thesis, in so far, at least, as their claim to exemption from torture which may subserve ends useful to mankind is concerned; but Professor Fowler goes on to make the important admission that the whole question is a comparatively new one, and one upon which the last word has yet to be heard. It is one, he observes, "which is fraught with much difficulty, and supplies a good instance of the range of subjects *within which the moral sentiment is probably in the course of development*. Recent researches, and still more recent speculations, have tended to impress us with the nearness of our kinship to other animals, and hence our sympathies with them and our interest in their welfare have been sensibly quickened. The word 'philanthropy'" (the Professor might have added the word humanity) "no longer expresses the most general of the sympathetic feelings, and we seem to require some new term which shall denote our fellow-feeling with the whole sentient creation."

It may perhaps almost be said that, in this passage, the keynote of the whole controversy is struck. The words italicized—that the "*moral sentiment*," with regard to animals, "*is probably in the course of development*"—give the clue needed to guide us through the labyrinth of doubtful disputation surrounding the subject, the maze of halting argument, one-sided sympathy, and contradictory practice. It is not till we philosophize the matter, till we look at it broadly from the point of view of the gradual evolution throughout the ages of something better in man than the mere lust of being and

possessing, that we can hope to arrive at a definite conclusion about it.

It is comparatively quite recently, and it is now only in countries which are, at least as regards the more humane virtues, in the van of civilization, that any "moral sentiment" at all has entered into our relations with the brutes, or that it has occurred to legislators to place them under the protection of the law. (Spain, at this moment, has no law protecting animals.) They are still practically without the pale, left solely to the uncovenanted mercies of masters often pitiless and of women hardened into stone by traditional usage or by the struggle for existence, and "a creature capable of dying of grief on its master's grave" may still be starved, or curarized, or baked or boiled alive without interference on the part of the power which would visit the theft of a loaf—perchance of a flower—with condign punishment. Even where the ægis of the law has been extended towards these poor humble citizens of a grudgingly bountiful state—poor useful drudges of a partially grateful community—the protection afforded leaves a good deal to be desired. The reason is, of course, that public opinion has not yet been brought to bear upon the matter with anything like sufficient force to effect a thorough reform. Here, where we are considered by some to carry tenderness for animals to the verge of sentimentality, the coster may not ill-treat his donkey, but the peer may torture doves to his heart's content; the boy-fiend may not flay a cat, but the butcher may bleed his calves and the fishmonger boil his lobsters alive; the poacher may not overload his pony, but the sportsman may strew his land with winged game, and worry trembling hares till they cry aloud with the cry of a child; brutal ruffians may not set cocks to fight,

but educated physiologists—in spite of some compromising legislation, whose practical effect, it would seem, has been mainly to throw dust in the eyes of a too confiding public—may bind a dog or a monkey to a torture-trough, and explore its brains or its intestines, with or without anæsthetics, destroying it, or not, as soon as its punishment is over.

In view of these and other inconsistencies, it cannot be matter of surprise to us that the last-mentioned form of cruelty, sanctioned as it is by the high authority of science, and professing as it does to result in important benefit to human beings, should find many supporters in this country. As long, for instance, as the torture and killing of animals for purposes of mere amusement, is permitted and approved amongst us, so long must we be prepared to see scientific and, as they would fain be considered, humanitarian experimenters torture and kill them from motives ostensibly much higher. Even admitting the sufferings caused by vivisection to be very much more refined, protracted, and altogether revolting than those caused by some forms of sport—although the point is a nicer one than many suspect—it is becoming evident to some—it will become evident to increasing numbers—that the opponents of the one cannot logically defend the other, and that torture for knowledge will stand or fall, in the long run, with torture for amusement. Both are but two analogous manifestations of the same principle—the naïve assumption that the animal kingdom is intended to be entirely subordinate to man's uses, whether in the form of food, service, sport, or scientific experiment; and that growing spirit which questions, which repudiates both, is in like manner derived from a great principle, destined to manifest itself in various and often startling forms—the

great, new principle that the lower animals *have* rights, that they should be included in the operation of man's developing "moral sentiment," and that they are proper subjects of that "fellow-feeling" which he is beginning to extend to "the whole sentient creation."

Not long since the question of the ethics of sport was being discussed in the presence of a distinguished anthropologist. On the point being referred to him whether it were possible to view sport in any other light than that of a relic of barbarism—of those pre-agricultural times when, if a man did not hunt, neither did he eat—he answered very distinctly in the negative. The pleas of utility, destruction of superfluous animal life, the British love of open-air exercise, and so forth, were quietly but firmly dismissed. "I am afraid," he said, "that I cannot account for the love of sport on any other theory. It is a survival of an earlier stage of culture or nothing."

And just as the spread of the growing science of anthropology must help to shame civilized man, in his social capacity, out of habits which are inexplicable except on the hypothesis of his evolution from the savage, so the science of biology, which is demonstrating every day more conclusively the closeness of his structural affinity with the brutes, should logically shame him out of "scientific" cruelty to them. To repeat Professor Fowler's words, "recent researches, and still more recent speculations, have tended to impress us with the nearness of our kinship to other animals." The human mind itself is, by many modern thinkers, held to be of animal origin, and, as Mr. Romanes pointed out in a lecture on the subject at the London Institution last December,¹

¹ December, 1884.

if it is admitted "that the process of organic and of mental evolution has been continuous throughout the whole region of life and of mind, with the one exception of the mind of man, it becomes antecedently improbable that it should have been interrupted at its terminal phase." However this may be (and at present the evidence from observation and experience, though amply confirmatory of the existence in brutes of emotional and ratiocinative faculties identical with our own, seems scarcely equal to the weight of the *à priori* assumption), the mere fact that an increasing number of scientific men incline to the theory justifies us in claiming from them a higher degree of sympathy with their "little brothers" than Francis of Assisi, or any other ante-evolutionist lover of animals, can possibly have entertained. In fact, there seem to be but two courses open to them. Either they may say—and some of them unhappily do say it, implicitly or explicitly—"We have nothing to do with spiritual and ethical obligations. Ourselves only highly-organized brutes, we are merely carrying out the law which runs through the whole of nature, and, in subjecting the lower animals to our uses, are but serving them as they in their turn serve their inferiors in strength or cunning; we do not profess that there is any difference in kind between them and ourselves which should render our behaviour different from theirs;"—or else they may say, "This newly-discovered fact of our intimate kinship, our identity with the lower animals, alters our relation to them. Instead of being their lords and masters, we now know that we are but their elder brothers, and however superior we may be to them in many respects, yet we owe them the compassion of fellow-feeling and the regard of kinship. That we are

ourselves animals who have, whether by the accident of articulation or from whatever cause, reached a considerably higher point of development than even the anthropoid ape, is the very reason why we are bound to respect the rights of our humbler *confrères*, and to give them the benefit of any superiority in wisdom or virtue which we owe to our more complex organization." Surely the latter is the only tenable position for the man of science who has not abandoned, together with his childish belief that he "had a soul," that other and deeper sense of a something—unexplained and inexplicable—dividing ratiocination from thought, instinct from inspiration, fidelity from religion, gesture from speech, the brute from the man. Unless he sink to the level of the thoroughgoing materialist, and deny any particular gain in his higher development, any obligation incumbent on him by the fact of his superiority, unless he disbelieve in beneficent activity, in labouring for the world's good, in struggling onward to ever fresh heights of enlightenment and of virtue—unless, in short, he cease to be all that we pride ourselves our own scientific men, at any rate, or the large majority of them are—he must learn to include the whole "sentient creation" in the exercise of his larger wisdom and deeper benevolence.

The Christian religion itself, though, as held in its integrity, indirectly promoting the interests of dumb animals by encouraging all those sentiments of pity and humanity which make deliberate cruelty to any living creature impossible, laid no such indisputable responsibilities upon us with regard to them as does modern science. The old "Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle," remained to counteract its gentler influences, and

the Biblical justification for tyranny over the brutes, like the Biblical justification for tyranny over the woman, the "He shall rule over thee," still conveniently buttresses the despotic instincts even of those persons who, in other respects, display a good deal of nineteenth century laxity in their interpretation of the Book of Genesis. But from the point of view of evolution, the whole range of sentient organisms, from the philosopher down to the amoeba is invested with a new sanctity, and comes to be viewed with the species of religious awe that was formerly observed only where the "immortal soul" was in question. The very plants have their share of reverence, as melting so insensibly into the animal world that it is hard to trace the line of demarcation between them; inorganic matter itself is not excluded; for those very mineral particles which they of old time regarded as symbolic of worthlessness, abasement, and dissolution, are, it seems, to partake of the sacredness with which the theory of development has endowed the entire universe. "Do not," said the philosopher before quoted, in answer to the remark of a friend that modern materialistic theories threatened to reduce him in his own consciousness to "an unmoral dust-atom," "Do not *speak disrespectfully of the dust.*"

It has then been proved, or attempted to be proved, that, excluding the extreme materialist who disclaims any aspirations or obligations specifically human, and is content to rank as a highly developed animal, while he professedly obeys those higher laws which are inaccessible to the brute creation only so far as it suits his convenience to do so—excluding such extreme cases as this—it has been shown that the tendency of modern science should logically be in the direction of mercy and not of

cruelty, of sympathy with, not of tyranny over, all sentient organisms whatsoever. And here it may not be superfluous to reiterate that in dwelling mainly, throughout these remarks, upon the attitude of science and of scientific men towards the question under consideration, no inference that the suffering inflicted in the physiological laboratory is greater than that inflicted in field or cover, in farm or slaughter-house, is intended. Whatever the truth may be in this particular, the main contention—that our general relation to the lower animals is being insensibly, and should be more rapidly and more voluntarily modified—remains untouched. This is true of all classes of the community, and of all departments of life. If any prominence is given to the vivisection controversy, as distinguished from the cognate subjects of sport, slaughter for food, what a recent writer has designated “bucolic vivisection,” and so forth, it is only because of the higher status and consequently greater responsibilities of those men of science who are the priests and the prophets of our new time. Called to a subtler initiation into holy mysteries than the adepts of the old religions and philosophies, than Chaldean mage, Egyptian heirophant, or Jewish Nazarite; placed in the van of civilization; moulding indirectly the destinies of empires; swaying opinion and revolutionizing thought by discoveries which a few centuries since would have brought them to the torture-chamber and the stake; revered for their genius and honoured for their goodness, singlemindedness, and humility—it is naturally to this new hierarchy that we turn, first of all, with the old “*noblesse oblige*,” bidding them lead, not hinder, any movement which has for its object the further development of what is highest in man; bidding them advance, not repress, the substitution for

Nature's bloodthirsty law of compulsory vicarious suffering, of the nobler human tendency to self-sacrifice, justice, and benevolence.

Are we then to understand, it will here be objected, that we are to behave towards the lower animals exactly as we should behave towards human beings, towards—let us say—an inferior race of men, whom, however low in the scale, modern ideas would not permit of our enslaving, mutilating, or torturing? Are we to abstain, not merely from experimenting upon their living bodies for the sake of knowledge which may benefit our own, but from chasing and killing them from motives of amusement; from domesticating and employing them as servants; from robbing them of their products, such as milk, eggs, wool, &c., for our uses; from exterminating and from eating them? Let us take the leading points of the familiar argument separately, and dividing it roughly, for the sake of clearness, into four heads, consider, first, our right to inflict suffering on animals for the sake of lessening our own or of adding to the general stock of knowledge; second, our right to torment them in the multifarious ways included in the generic term sport; third, our right to employ them as servants, including that of making use of such of their products as can be obtained without injury or loss of life; fourth, our right to exterminate them as pests, and to kill them for food.

To begin, then, with Vivisection. The question of physiological experiments upon live animals has recently been brought prominently before the general public in a long controversy, extending over nearly two months, in the columns of the leading journal. The correspondence commenced on the 16th of last December¹ with a trium-

¹ December, 1884.

phant pæan from a writer signing himself F. R. S., over a difficult and delicate operation in brain surgery which promised to be a success, and which, it appeared, was made possible only by certain previous experiments by Professor Ferrier upon the brains of rabbits and monkeys. A leading article of the same date echoed the jubilation of "F. R. S.," pointed out that here, at last, was one of those complete and signal "direct instances" of the utility of vivisection for which anti-vivisectionists had long been clamouring, and took the opportunity strongly to urge the removal, or at least the modification, of such restrictions upon the practice in this country as were created by the Vivisection Act of 1876. The challenge thus thrown down was, of course, taken up promptly by the opposite side, and a brisk fire was kept up for weeks between "F. R. S." and his supporters, on the one hand, and the anti-vivisectionists, headed by Miss Cobbe, Dr. Anna Kingsford, Mr. Freeman, and the Bishop of Oxford on the other. About a week after the opening of the discussion, the patient, whose miraculous restoration to life was to have silenced the objectors to experiments on living rabbits and monkeys for ever, unhappily died, and another leading article appeared, which ought perhaps to have been more of a palinode, considering that the rejoicing over the one recovered sheep—the solitary "direct instance" of the practical benefit of physiological experiment—had been somewhat disproportionate, as well as a little premature. As it was, the writer contended that "the facts established by 'F. R. S.,' and not materially impugned by his critics, remained substantially unaffected by the fatal issue of the case," proceeding to entrench himself behind the undeniable proposition that "knowledge itself is a benefit to mankind,

and . . . all knowledge wrested from nature will sooner or later be turned to profitable account, both in the enlargement of man's intelligence and the relief of man's estate."

Now, to the plain citizen of average intelligence, the ordinary looker-on, who was not committed to one side or the other in the very pretty quarrel, and who, it may be, first took the opportunity of making himself seriously acquainted with the subject in the columns of his *Times* throughout the months of December and January, the impression left on the mind by the perusal of the whole discussion must have been one of bewilderment. Every proposition advanced by the one side was instantly and peremptorily contradicted by the other—not always, by the way, with the *suaviter in modo* which is supposed to be an agreeable characteristic of modern controversy. Vivisectionists could point to no conclusive proof of the utility of their researches to mankind. Vivisectionists could adduce numberless instances of such utility, apart from the signal one which had led to the discussion, and which, through a mere accident, had failed of its effect. The very same or closely similar operations to the operation in brain-surgery which had given rise to the flourish of trumpets in the *Times* of December 16th, had been performed before without the aid of vivisection, on the basis of careful clinical observation alone. The operation was unique, and nothing at all like it could have been performed anywhere but for the researches on living animals of Drs. Ferrier and Yeo. All that was necessary to the practice of medicine could be learned at the bedside. No diagnosis based on clinical study only could ever hope to be so complete as that which was also founded upon physiological research. Recent

legislative restrictions were practically stultified by the liberal issue of special certificates to individual experimenters. Recent legislative restrictions were so hampering and paralyzing to science in this country that experimenters had frequently to expatriate themselves in order to prosecute their researches. And so on.

Where was the truth? How was it possible for ordinary people to base a decision upon evidence so conflicting? Yet the *Times* correspondence might fairly be looked upon as a kind of summing up of the leading arguments upon both sides; an epitome of that more detailed and voluminous controversy which has now been carried on for some years in print, on platforms, and in general society. Assuming here, at any rate, for purposes of convenience, that it afforded such a useful *résumé*, presenting as it did to the public at large the main features of the vivisection question in little, let us admit at once that the case of the anti-vivisectionists, as represented by their champions in the *Times*, is not quite so inexpugnable as some of the hotter partisans among them would have us believe. That is to say, it is not inexpugnable upon those grounds—those lower grounds, as they must be called—of utility and expediency, which the disputants for the most part appear to prefer. It is impossible to deny, when one comes to examine the evidence closely, and notwithstanding such pregnant admissions as Claude Bernard's, "Without doubt our hands are empty to-day, although our mouths are full of legitimate promises for the future"—it is impossible to seriously controvert that dictum of the *Times* leader-writer that "all knowledge wrested from nature will sooner or later be turned to profitable account, both in the enlargement of man's intelligence and the relief of man's estate."

The difficulty of adducing direct instances of the relation of this or that particular experiment upon animals to this or that particular surgical operation, the scarcity of such obvious examples, as shown by the "*Fubilate*" over a single one, of F. R. S. on December 16th, prove no more than the general truth that scientific research always has been and always will be in advance of practical application. The restoration or the succumbing of an individual sufferer, such as the patient in the Hospital for Epilepsy and Paralysis, who supplied the text of the *Times* discussion, is really nothing, or very little, to the purpose. Such cases may serve as useful controversial weapons, where the object is, not to convince the thoughtful few, but to marshal imposing arguments for the benefit of the unreflecting multitude. The real issue is, and will remain, untouched by the success or the failure of—shall we say *experiments* like that of Dr. Hughes Bennett and Mr. Godlee? The mere question, "Does this animal's torture benefit that human being?" does not embrace it; the production of a thousand cures directly based upon as many vivisections, and heralded by as many leading articles in the *Times*, would not affect it. For it is a deeper and a wider thing than the majority of the combatants on either side appear to divine. It is concerned with nothing less than an epoch in the moral progress of man; with a new development of his nature, as yet so tentative, so immature, that moralists fail to recognize it and philanthropists speak of it below their breath; it has to do with the extension of a rigid justice as well as of a fitful compassion to the brutes, with the profound modification—nay, the revolutionizing—of our attitude towards them in all departments of life. The tokens of the coming change are not now

so scanty but the seeing eye can detect them, sometimes in the most unexpected quarters ; and though Whewell be ignorant of it, and Fowler acknowledge it but grudgingly, the emancipation (within limits hereafter to be defined) of animals will most surely follow the emancipation of the slave and the emancipation of the woman in the record of man's higher development. We have no right to inflict suffering upon other sentient beings for the relief of our own or for the sake of prolonging human life, not because the benefit reaped is doubtful—we are assuming here that it is not—but because in so doing we are withstanding the true law of progress, which is an inward and not an outward, a moral and not a material law ; we are obstructing our own fuller development ; we are retrogressing to the dark ages instead of co-operating with the forces that make for light and joy ; we are saying to the Power—call it Nature, call it Evolution, call it God—which has made us what we are, Hitherto shalt thou come ; the “enlargement of man's intelligence and the relief of man's estate” is the highest and ultimate good.

There is one point connected with the controversy about which there cannot really be two opinions, and that is the hardening effect of the practice of vivisection upon the moral nature of all those who are immediately concerned in it, as distinguished from the outside world. Our superiority as a nation over other countries in the matter of humanity, and the undoubted fact that we have not as yet rivalled French, German, Italian—alas ! that we must add American—physiologists in callousness to the sufferings of the living “subjects” of our experiments, should not blind us to the developments which a future of practically unrestricted freedom of research has

in store, even in England. We are not wanting in this country in the material out of which Claude Bernards and Paul Berts, De Cyons and Mantegazzas are made. "The cruelties which I have myself seen practised by medical students upon hospital cats," a clergyman, who had at one time some thoughts of entering the medical profession, remarked the other day, "sicken me now. I have ever since felt a brute for not having myself destroyed the wretched animals." The elevation of vivisection to the rank of an acknowledged, nay, a highly valuable and honourable branch of science, must tend, not to repress brutality like this, but to exonerate and to encourage it. No science can be pursued to any purpose by scrupulous, half-hearted votaries, whose consciences are pricking them, whose spirit is in revolt, whose hands are fettered by doubt, or trembling with outraged feeling. The physiologists themselves admit it. "The rocks are broken, and put in the crucible," says one. "The plant is dissected. . . . In animal life the same method must be adopted to unlock the secrets of nature. *The question of the animal being sensitive cannot alter the mode of investigation.*" And thus "the brutalizing hardening of the scientist" matches "the brutalizing selfishness of the unscientific, who, by another's torment, hopes to gain benefit for his body. As if the body were the whole man, or as if any gain to man's mortal body could be put against the deterioration of his moral nature!" Truly that higher morality of the future which, following the methods of astronomical progress, no longer regards the body of man as the centre of the universe, but rather the sun of righteousness, will smile at the bandying of phrases about utility and inutility, at the lust for "a direct instance," at the triumph over pale and careworn

convalescents blessing the torturers of animals for their own restoration to life. Are those old words all too old for a hearing now, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Shall we turn a deaf ear to them, and stand by to see our young men, aspirants to that noblest art of which no abuse can desecrate the sacredness, and no obloquy (self-imposed, alas!) mar the true uses, grow up to rival as nearly as they may the Continental types of excellence in their domain? They cannot prosper in it without enthusiasm; they cannot sit still and allow themselves to be distanced in the race for knowledge by foreign rivals, whose greater facilities and immunity from the shackles of an unfavourable public opinion our physiologists already regard with envy. They have no choice but to press forward on the same tack, and in due course, to become themselves, Englishmen though they be, Magendies, Bernards, De Cyons.

Are any ignorant of the extent to which the love of mere knowledge—apart even from the plea of some possible distant benefit to man in future ages—carries men like these? Let us see of what stuff they are made.

In an article contributed by an American medical man to Lippincott's Magazine, August, 1884, we find the following: "There is a certain experiment—one of the most excruciating that can be performed—which consists in exposing the spinal cord of the dog for the purpose of demonstrating the functions of the spinal nerves. . . . At present the preliminary process is generally performed under anæsthetics; it is an hour or two later, when the animal has partly recovered from the severe shock of the operation, that the wound is reopened and the experiment begins. It was during a class-demonstration of this kind

by Magendie, before the introduction of ether, that the circumstance occurred which one hesitates to think possible in a person retaining a single spark of humanity or pity. 'I recall to mind,' says Dr. Latour, who was present at the time, 'a poor dog, the roots of whose vertebral nerves Magendie desired to lay bare, to demonstrate Bell's theory, which he claimed as his own. The dog, mutilated and bleeding, twice escaped from under the implacable knife, and threw its front paws around Magendie's neck, licking, as if to soften his murderer, and ask for mercy. I confess I was unable to endure that heart-rending spectacle.' "

So much for Magendie. (The writer, it may be added, goes on to tell us that this experiment, "which we are told passes even the callousness of Germany to repeat, and which every leading champion of vivisection in Great Britain reprobates for medical teaching, "this experiment has been performed publicly again and again in American medical colleges." Obviously we must not trust too blindly to the humane instincts of the Anglo-Saxon race.)

Let us pass on to an excerpt from Claude Bernard's "*Leçons de Physiologie Opératoire*," Paris, 1879. Speaking of the notorious drug, which, as he holds, reduces the living body to a corpse-like state, deprived of movement but not of the power to suffer, he says, "Curare is now employed in a vast number of experiments as a means of restraining the animals. There are but few observations of which the narrative does not commence by notifying that they were made on a curarized dog." "He believes," as Miss Cobbe points out, commenting on this passage, "that it creates 'the most atrocious sufferings which the imagination of man can conceive,' and yet he

is perfectly satisfied that it should be 'employed in a vast number of experiments as a means of restraining the animals.'"

So much for Claude Bernard.

As to M. de Cyon, the description from his *Methodik der physiologischen Experimente und Vivisectionen* (St. Petersburg, 1876) of the ideal vivisector, is almost too well known to bear repetition. And yet, until the simple lesson which it teaches, the lesson, namely, that we have here the *type* to which ardent students of all nationalities must, in course of time, inevitably conform—the logical result of intellect divorced from conscience, knowledge from wisdom, zeal from goodness—until this simple lesson has been assimilated by us, it is necessary to keep the passage in memory.

"The true vivisector," says M. de Cyon, "must approach a difficult vivisection with the same joyful excitement and the same delight wherewith a surgeon undertakes a difficult operation, from which he expects extraordinary consequences. He who shrinks from cutting into a living animal, he who approaches a vivisection as a disagreeable necessity, may very likely be able to repeat one or two vivisections, but will never become an artist in vivisection. He who cannot follow some fine nerve-thread, scarcely visible to the naked eye, into the depths, if possible sometimes tracing it to a new branching, with joyful alertness for hours at a time; he who feels no enjoyment when at last, parted from its surroundings and isolated, he can subject that nerve to electrical stimulation; or when, in some deep cavity, guided only by the sense of touch of his finger-ends, he ligatures and divides an invisible vessel—to such a one there is wanting that which is most necessary for a

successful vivisector. The pleasure of triumphing over difficulties held hitherto insuperable is always one of the highest delights of the vivisector. And the sensation of the physiologist, when from a gruesome wound, full of blood and mangled tissue, he draws forth some delicate nerve-branch, and calls back to life a function which was already extinguished—this sensation has much in common with that which inspires a sculptor when he shapes forth fair living forms from a shapeless mass of marble.”

So much for M. de Cyon.

Let us now for a moment consider what kind of being it is whom the first of these men could mangle while it was caressing him, whom the second delights to curarize, and whose bleeding entrails the third regards as material plastic and beautiful to his hand, as marble to that of the sculptor. On that memorable day, the 16th of December—that epoch-making day in the history of the Vivisection controversy—there appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* a contribution, signed R. C. F., to a discussion as to whether the almost human actions of clever dogs are referable to “Reason or Instinct.” The writer quoted from a lecture delivered by Professor Romanes at Manchester an instance of animal intelligence observed by Mr. Romanes himself. “‘I will give you an example of the display of reason by a dog which is of more value than any amount of discussion. I drove this dog from its country home as a present to a friend who lived in a town some ten miles distant. Several weeks afterwards I again drove to visit this friend, and when my horses were being harnessed for the return journey the terrier must have reasoned with analogy that I was about to return home, and thereupon formed the resolution of accompanying

me to the hunting-grounds of his puppyhood. But he must further have reasoned that, since on the occasion of my previous visit I had left him behind as a present to my friend, I should not on this occasion be inclined to take him home. Lastly, he must have reasoned that there was one expedient whereby he could solicit my protection on the homeward journey without the danger of being imprisoned, and this expedient he adopted; for, after we had vainly searched for Skye, to prevent his following my dog-cart, I started, and when two miles on my way home I overtook him, lying in the middle of the road, with his face to the town, evidently expecting my approach. And, as the dog had clearly contemplated, the distance was too great for me to return with him. I had to take him with me to his old home in the country.' Taking simple, daily examples of canine sagacity," adds R. C. F., "they seem to afford ample proofs that the dog possesses something more than mere animal instinct. The peculiar way in which a brute will become attached to a family, its predilection for an individual member, its intuitive sense of being regarded in the light of a protector, its suspicion towards strangers, its extreme sensitiveness and quick powers of distinguishing between friend and enemy, and lastly, its indisputable possession of the quality of jealousy, stamp the animal as laying claim to a far higher mental development than we at present accord it. Lord Byron finely and truthfully speaks of 'Poor Ponto' as 'the first to welcome, and the foremost to defend.'"

The opinions of Mr. Romanes as to the oneness in kind of the human and animal intelligence have already been cited. He appears to think that if the term "reason" were restricted to its proper meaning, if, that

is, we exclude the ideas of self-consciousness and introspective thought, there can be "no question as to the rationality of brutes." "Ratiocination, or the drawing of inferences from the perceived equality of relations, *i.e.*, inferring results from past experience," there can be no doubt that they possess in common with man.

And when it comes to emotion, when it comes to affection, and sympathy, and constancy, and trustworthiness, do they not often actually surpass man? Of this truth there is not one of us but could supply plentiful instances from our own experience. We will take but two examples of the humanity—the paradox is intentional—and the capacity for love of the dog.

On the 29th of November last, the *Spectator* published the following letter from Dr. J. H. Clarke :

"SIR,—Your well-known love for animals encourages me to hope you will find room for an account of one of the most touching incidents of animal affection ever recorded. The account is to be found in an article by C. Egerton Jennings, F.R.C.S., in the *Lancet* of November 22nd.¹ The scene is a physiological laboratory. A dog has undergone a terrible experimental operation—removal of part of the bowels. The operation, though performed under anæsthetics, is one which necessarily entails very acute after-sufferings. It is the second night after this operation, and the dog is left in its pain, tied so that it cannot move. But it is not left altogether without a sympathizer. '*During the night another dog, tied up in the same room, slipped its collar, and bit through the cord which secured the subject of the experiment.*' At ten o'clock the next morning it was

¹ November, 1884.

found that 'the dressings were removed, and both dogs had been running about the room.' Let your readers picture to themselves what happened in the darkness of that awful night. One dog, tied down and unable to stir, is crying in pain. Another—awaiting the same fate—hearing the cries, struggles till it frees itself to go to the sufferer's help. Thinking the cords that bind it may be the cause of its pain, it gnaws them through. Next, the dressings are torn off; and as this brings no relief, the victim rushes round the room in its agony, with its sympathizing friend at its side. At last it can run no longer; and the experimenter, on his arrival, finds it lying on its side. 'The abdomen was tympanitic, and very painful to the touch.' It is a comfort to learn that the dog died at 11.45 a.m., after a dose of atropia, given with the object of producing that result.

"Thus ended the tragedy. The 'subject of the experiment' was, we are told, a black-and-tan bitch, weighing 16.3 lbs. The 'subject' of the next experiment—in all likelihood the sympathizing friend of the first—'a bitch weighing 16.3 lbs.' The powers of love and sympathy in the hearts of these creatures, and their sensitiveness to pain, cannot be *weighed*, and so do not enter into the calculations of the experimenters. All the experiments failed."

As regards the power of faithful love in dogs, Mr. Wood, in a recent work, "Petland Revisited," gives, perhaps, the most profoundly pathetic instance on record.

"When, in 1866, my niece, Miss Janet S. H——g, was at the boarding-school of Miss H——, Avenue de Neuilly, she had lessons in painting from M. H——n. At the beginning of the session, he told my niece a few anecdotes about his little Scotch terrier called 'Médore.'

He was obliged to leave Paris for a time, and not being able to take the dog with him, left it in charge of a friend. By some curious chance the friend was called suddenly to St. Petersburg, and, not knowing what to do with the little creature, took it with him. Both man and dog reached St. Petersburg safely; but shortly after their arrival the dog was lost, and, though every effort was made to recover it, M. H——n's friend was obliged to write and say that 'Médore' was hopelessly lost. About the end of May, some months after the letter had been received, M. H——n came as usual to give his lesson. He seemed in great grief, and in broken accents asked to be excused from giving the lesson, as he was quite incapable of it. 'My poor little dog! my poor little dog!' was all that he could say for some time. At last, being encouraged by his pupil's sympathy, he told her the whole story. For some time a miserable, half-starved dog, covered with scars and bruises, had persisted in scraping at his door; and the servants, being annoyed by its persistence, kicked the dog downstairs repeatedly. But as soon as it recovered from its fall it returned to the door, and renewed the scratching. Whenever M. H——n entered or left the house, the dog kept jumping upon him, and trying in every way to attract his attention. At last an idea flashed across his mind. Could this disreputable-looking animal be by any possible chance the dog which had been lost at St. Petersburg? He fixed his eyes upon it, and said 'Médore!' The dog gave a piercing cry, and fell at his feet. He picked it up, carried it into the house, and laid it gently on a sofa. But 'Médore' was dead."

Is it possible, when one has really grasped the full significance of such a narrative as this, to do other than echo

the words of Lord Tennyson's Becket : "Who misuses a dog would misuse a child?"

And let no man contend that if it be unlawful to mangle for our selfish uses a creature so nearly allied to—alas ! in many respects so superior to ourselves—as the dog, we are yet within our right in experimenting upon less highly developed organisms. As soon as an organism becomes sentient, it acquires the right to immunity from torment at our hands, and since the limits of sentience are not easy to define, and the very action of anæsthetics a matter of uncertainty, let us abstain from the butcher's work altogether, and leave to every "subject of experiment" that hath breath the power to "praise the Lord," to fulfil its little allotted span of existence in natural happiness and unvexed liberty.

In this year's¹ exhibition of pictures by continental artists at the French Gallery, Pall Mall, there was to be seen a striking and deeply pathetic presentation upon a few feet of canvas of this question of vivisection. The genius of the painter, Gabriel Max, has been lavished with loving enthusiasm, with burning pity, with a noble disregard of popularity, with true and worthy aim upon his subject. Yet he treats it with a dignity, a quietude, a gentleness which appeal to us more forcibly than wrathful declamation or studied sensationalism, whether of pamphlet or painting. His "Genius of Pity staying the Vivisector's hand," stands calmly beautiful, so secure of her ultimate triumph, so loving to all men and all things, so peaceable, so tender, that her brow is not even contracted with pain, much less with anger ; she has forgiven the very torturer of the little spaniel she has taken

¹ 1885.

from the trough, which nestles in her arm, muzzled and bound and bleeding, but not uncomforted. In her left hand the Spirit holds a pair of golden scales, in one of which is seen the image of the human brain, crowned with laurel, in the other the human heart, as it were aflame, glowing with a sacred fire. The scale containing the brain kicks the beam. The physiologist meanwhile looks round in surprise, if haply he may discover what has become of his "subject." His expression of inquiry, of wonderment, is well imagined. It is the attitude of Science when her supremacy is called in question, when the laurels she has wrung from superstition and obscurantism are disputed by a new and all unlooked-for rival—*Lovingkindness*—when she begins vaguely to perceive that apart from orthodoxy, and apart from bigotry, and apart from prejudice, there remains a force of pity and ruth in the universal human heart with which she has to reckon.

One word before passing on to the next division of our subject. If the higher and humaner view (here attempted to be set forth) of our duty to the lower animals is not destined to prevail; if the "law of kindness" is not to be immensely expanded in a new direction—new, at least, as regards the Western civilizations—and eventually to supersede that sanguinary "law of sacrifice" which properly belongs only to the world's infancy—then let us at least be honest with ourselves, and frankly recognize our true position. Let the Christian—priest or layman—no longer affect to believe that the torture of animals for man's bodily advantage is reconcilable with his allegiance to his sweet and merciful Master, or with any sort of rational theory of a progressive—not fossilized—Christianity. Let him give up phrases about vicarious sacrifice based on selfishness and savagery (the world has out-

grown all "sacrifice" but *self*-sacrifice, which implies a voluntary, not a compulsory act), and cease to shelter his own apathy behind talk about "mystery," his own despotism behind quotations from the Pentateuch. And let the materialist man of science be frankly materialist, own that his goddess is

" Nature, red in tooth and claw
With ravine,"

admit that alleviation of human suffering is at best but the indirect result, and not the immediate object of his researches, and that he claims, as a French Professor claimed the other day at the Paris School of Medicine, "the absolute right of science to pursue her own ends in her own way, uninterrupted," not only "by churchmen," but by "*moral philosophers*."

The question of sport is one which is very easily settled, theoretically. Defining the term sport as the pursuit and slaughter of animals for purposes of mere amusement—as distinguished from motives of utility—it is absolutely indefensible. We have seen that it is nothing but a relic of savagery, and if its maintenance in civilized countries be indeed necessary to preserve physical health, manliness, agility, and skill, so much the worse for the civilization which requires such an adjunct and for the manhood which proclaims its dependence upon it. "The destruction of life for mere destruction's sake," well says Dr. Anna Kingsford, "has never been, and cannot be, a source of pleasure to any *civilized* human being; and where such destruction is necessary, as in the clearing of jungle-lands and other districts infested by carnivora, poisonous reptiles, and vermin, the

work of extermination should be undertaken rather as a duty than as a pastime, precisely as righteous war is undertaken by the hero, being neither shunned for selfish motives, nor compromised with for convenience or comfort's sake, but intrepidly and conscientiously performed in the spirit of the redeemer. For the true man is the redeemer, not the tyrant of the earth."

But it is a libel on manhood to affirm that the stimulus of something to capture or destroy is necessary to its full development. Let but our boys be trained not to kill, as they are now trained to kill; let them but be taught from the first that to take life in any other spirit than "the spirit of the redeemer" is crime, and they will soon find other outlets for their energies, better motives for stiff exercise, worthier opportunities for displaying their skill. Already we can point to many men whose manliness is beyond question—nay, whose manliness it is which has raised them above the pursuits of the savage and the instincts of the brute—men like the late Professor Rolleston, for instance, to whom sport is abhorrent on account of its cruelty. And there are probably many more who would have openly joined the ranks of the opponents of sport, but for that fetish of opinion which proclaims devotion to it the hall-mark of the man, and, what is more (!), of the gentleman. There is no doubt that a considerable reaction has set in of late, and it must be largely developed in the future if the moral sentiment is to go on expanding and its operation is not to be confined to the comparatively speaking narrow limits of the human race.

It will here, of course, be indignantly objected that the true sportsman detests cruelty as much as any of this new school of thinkers can possibly detest it. He is

revolted by such "unsportsmanlike" behaviour as that, for instance, of the Crown Prince Rudolph of Austria, who, in a recent book of Eastern travel, tells us that he shot, in Palestine and elsewhere, not merely wolves, bears, wild boars, and desert foxes, but storks, "cooing doves," even, on one occasion, a locust! "So eager was the hunter to destroy," says a reviewer of the work in question, "that what he could not shoot he would deliberately poison, and that in a manner which it is rather sickening to read about. His way of decoying his quarry was disgusting and unsportsmanlike. *Blinded pelicans and cormorants* were freely and unhesitatingly used for this purpose. On one occasion (but we will quote Prince Rudolph's own words), 'I had taken a live hen with me, and had seated myself beside one of the ancient ponds, enjoying the beauty of the evening. *I pinched the hen perpetually* in order that its cry might attract the wild beasts. Unfortunately, instead of jackals, some Englishmen came, who looked at me with astonishment, but soon went on their way.'

Yet these astonished and outraged Britons had probably themselves, in their time, assisted at "tournaments of doves," enjoyed a *battue*, or followed a "trained" deer, turned out of a cart to run for its life, in an agony of terror and suspense. The distinctions drawn by these gentlemen are in truth too subtle to be apprehended by the ordinary intelligence. Nor are the records of British sport—alas! so immaculate that English gentlemen can afford to look askance at the Prince Rudolphs of the continent or the 'Arrys of cockneydom.

There were published in London during last year¹ two

¹ 1884.

Memoirs which made some stir, each after its kind: the one the fascinating Life of a profound thinker, the other the gossiping autobiography of a somewhat shallow politician. Each of these books chanced to contain an instance—one of them amusingly unconscious—of the occasional barbarity of English sport. The first incident must have occurred some forty years ago, the second more than twenty; but whether, in the meanwhile, much or any progress has been made in the regard for animal suffering, where it chanced to conflict with man's diversion, is a point not very easily settled. The first anecdote is a story of Mr. Froude's Oxford days which, he tells us, caused something like anguish to the stern, unsparing, tender-hearted, pitiful old man to whom he told it.

"The hounds had met at Woodstock. They had drawn the covers without finding a fox, and not caring to have a blank day, one of the whips had caught a passing sheep dog, rubbed its feet with aniseed, and set it to run. It made for Oxford in its terror, the hounds in full cry behind. They caught the wretched creature in a field outside the town and tore it to pieces."

Compare with this a naïve entry in Lord Malmesbury's Journal.

"Oct. 25, 1859. I beat the woods of Auchnasoul, and killed six woodcocks, twelve blackcocks, *also the stag whose leg I broke two days ago*. This good day's sport and luck has closed my connection with Achnacarry, which has lasted for fifteen years of the prime of my life. I rowed home from Moich with a heavy heart."

In that heart-heaviness, did any sorrow for the noble creature whose forty-eight hours of anguish had but just terminated—through a happy accident—form a part?

I trow not. The noble sportsman's melancholy (and here let me disclaim anything like personal animadversion; he stands merely as a good average type of the genus sportsman) would seem rather to spring from the reflection that he will no longer be able to bring down hecatombs of woodcocks and blackcocks to his gun in the woods of Auchnasoul, nor stalk deer with the chance of sending them, wounded and broken-hearted, to perish in the forest solitudes.

But time would fail to tell of the countless acts of thoughtless barbarity which are perpetrated every day, in cheerful good faith, with a light heart and a steady hand by our countrymen; and, it must be added, since women hunt, fish, and even shoot, to say nothing of the encouragement given by them to all forms of sport, by our countrywomen. Every number of every sporting or "country gentleman's" newspaper is full of them, and books like Mr. Bromley Davenport's "Sport," or even like Mr. Jeffries' "Red Deer Land," show how completely we have got into the habit of accepting them as matters of course, just as, erstwhile, we accepted as matters of course the *patria potestas*, the feudal system, the old criminal law, or the slave-trade.

In Mr. Gilbert's serio-comedy, "Pygmalion and Galatea," the heroine is made to wring her hands over the "murder" of an antelope, which is being displayed as a trophy of a good day's sport. The mirth of the audience is thereby provoked. The situation appears to them—how should it appear otherwise?—to be comic. But the jest of one age is the earnest of the next. The unsophisticated statue-maiden is a prophetess. The future will hold with her, if we are not to relapse into barbarism, and the destruction of life for pure amusement, the

pursuit of living things for pure exercise and "letting off steam," the tormenting of fellow-beings for pure pastime, will not be the occupation of good men.

Our third point, too, is not one upon which we need linger long. Are we entitled to tame and train animals to our uses? and to rob them of those products of which they can be deprived without pain or injury? At present, surely, the answer is, Yes. The life of an animal who is owned, cared for, and loved by a kind master is undoubtedly a happy one, and the loss of liberty is probably more than compensated to him by the comforts he gets, and by the cherishing and affection which make domestication, upon the whole, a gain to him. But affection is the test. There must be love. The lower animal must stand to the higher—to mankind—in the relation of child to parent—not of drudge to tyrant, of slave to overseer. That we are still an immense, an incalculable distance from this ideal, does not alter the ideal. This is the standard at which we have to aim, and there are a thousand ways of helping to make it the universal standard. As to products, such as milk, eggs, wool, and so forth, may we not, without a great stretch of the imagination, believe that, could the creatures who have fed out of our hands and learned to love our voices, speak to us in return, they would offer us such things as they could in requital of our care? Here, too, the rule would seem to be not abstinence but moderation, guided by sympathy, and tempered with love.

As for those products which cannot be obtained without wholesale slaughter and wholesale cruelty, products which are for the most part luxuries, rather than necessities to man, such as furs and feathers, it will behove us to examine, with very much more care than

we have hitherto done, the manner in which they are procured for us, and the justifiableness of encouraging the traffic in them. If, for instance, we find it to be a fact that the goldfinch is fast disappearing from among us, because his wings, *torn from his living body*, that the plumage may retain its full brilliancy, are largely used for the adornment of ladies' hats and bonnets; if we find it to be a fact that "seals are most readily captured at the time when they have young cubs not yet capable of following their mother through the water," and that our sealskin jackets and facings mean such butchery "that it takes a man some time *to get used* to it, and that the half-human wailing of the little seals, as they climb and roll about the mangled carcase of their mother, is a sound that, *until he is hardened to the work*, will make his sleep uneasy at night"—if we find these things to be incontrovertible facts—shall we not—every man according to his conscience—*act* upon the knowledge?

The question of the slaughter of animals, for the sake of their products leads us to the kindred one, reserved for consideration under our fourth head, of their slaughter for food. (The destruction of animals as pests has been already touched upon, incidentally, and we have seen that it is permissible, provided the task be undertaken as a duty, and not as a pastime, in the "spirit of the redeemer," and not of the savage.) And here we are brought face to face with a subject far too wide to be discussed in a few words at the close of an essay which has already outgrown its limits. The questions whether man is naturally a flesh-eating or fruit-eating animal; whether, if he ceased to be kreophagist and became vegetarian, he would thrive, or the reverse; the various considerations, ethical, social, and economical, involved

in the main problem—all this is matter for a lengthy treatise, and cannot be entered upon here in any detail. Suffice it to say that the movement in favour of a return to simpler, purer, more wholesome, and more humane habits in the matter of diet appears to be gaining strength, and that the more men's thoughts are led to dwell on the whole question of their relation to the lower animals, the more their consciences are quickened, their affections stimulated, and their sensibilities aroused in regard to them, the more readily, it may be presumed, will they abandon every habit, however deep-rooted, every practice, however time-honoured, which means degradation, degeneration, suffering, and death for innumerable living things. In the meantime, those who are fond of drawing a distinction between torturing and killing will do well to make their reprobation of sport as clearly understood as their detestation of vivisection, and also to see that the killing which they justify shall be as swift and as merciful as human charity can make it. Theoretically, there is much to be said for their view. Killing is not always cruel, nor death always a calamity. There are moments when we human beings regret the ordinance which forbids the invoking of a desired euthanasia for ourselves and others, and there are ways in which the placid life of an animal can be brought to a close more painless than would be the natural termination.

Practically, it is to be feared that the evils attendant on the practice of flesh-eating—the horrors of the cattle-steamer, of the railroad, of the street, of the slaughter-house—are inevitable, and, in the words of Dr. Kingsford, “inseparable from modern European habits of diet. Sufferings by sea and land, in transit from different

ports, by rail and by road ; sufferings in the live-stock markets, in the pens of the slaughter-houses, while waiting their turn for death ; sufferings by thirst, starvation, sickness, overcrowding, cold, heat, mutilation, blows, terror, apprehension, exhaustion, neglect, to say nothing of the wanton barbarity to which they are too often subjected—such, under the present hateful and unnatural system, is the woful lot of the patient, gentle, laborious creatures who should be ploughing our fields, and yielding us, not their flesh and blood, but milk and wool, and the fruits of their willing toil.”

So that—without pronouncing a hasty judgment on flesh-eaters, without laying down a rash canon for which, it may be, the world is not yet ripe—shall we not meditate on these things?

Let those who would gain a higher standpoint and wider views in the whole matter, who desire to extend the law of kindness, and to endow dumb animals with the rights their very dumbness claims, their very helplessness demands—let such turn away their eyes from Western “civilization” for a moment, and go sit at the feet of him who was Asia’s light, and whose beautiful life has become a household word to the unlearned, since it was clothed in pellucid verse by Mr. Edwin Arnold’s loving genius. Not the least striking feature in his exquisite portrait of Siddârtha Buddha—a portrait which ranks for some of us with the Arthur of the “*Idylls*,” the Arthur of “*In Memoriam*,” the Beatrice of the “*Vita Nuova*” and “*Commedia*,” the lover of the “*Sonnets from the Portuguese*”—is the gracious thought and care for animals which runs through the whole lovely life. It is not the doctrine of the transmigration of souls—not, at least, in Mr. Arnold’s poem—which inspires the

“Lord Buddha” with his boundless compassion, his limitless charity, in which bird and beast—yea, vermin and reptile—find sweet shelter in common with all human-kind. It is a profound human feeling for feeling, sensitiveness to others’ suffering, sympathy in others’ needs, a profound sense of the awfulness

“Of life which all can take but none can give,
Life, which all creatures love and strive to keep,
Wonderful, dear, and pleasant unto each,
Even to the meanest ; yea, a boon to all
Where pity is, for pity makes the world
Soft to the weak and noble for the strong.”



PART II.

*THE "DELPHINE" OF MADAME DE
STAËL.*

“The offended fairy at the christening of a gifted woman frequently revenges herself by decreeing that the child shall, in after years, be compelled to choose between Love and Fame. In other words, she destines her either to imperil her reason or to break her heart. If the uninvited godmother be of a more than commonly malignant turn, she will further endow the scourged creature with a certain tender scrupulosity which will cause her to prefer that which public opinion represents to her as Duty to either.”



THE "DELPHINE" OF MADAME DE STAËL.

FOR a dozen people who read—whether for pleasure or as an educational exercise—the “*Corinne*” of Madame de Staël, there is perhaps not one who knows more than the name of her “*Delphine*.” The book was so completely eclipsed by its brilliant successor, that its own rare merit has been to a great extent overlooked, on this side the Channel, at any rate, and, by a sort of accident, a work full of the profoundest interest to the student of human nature, full of the most exquisitely delicate character-painting, of the most nice and true reflection, has been practically shelved for the majority of English readers. It is possible that there may be more than one cause for this neglect. The controversy that was waged so fiercely at the time the book appeared over its moral tendency has no doubt left a lurking suspicion of it in many minds at the present day, though the feverish unsettlement of opinion on all important subjects in the Paris of 1802

had more to do with the excitement it created than anything it contained.¹ Again, the form in which it is written has unquestionably been against it. It requires not a little courage and self-command to attack a novel consisting of a long series of long letters. The very sight of the closely-printed page, without break or variety of any kind, produces an instinctive dread of monotony and prosiness which is not altogether ill-founded, even in the case of writers of the highest order. The difficulty of sustaining dramatic propriety in all the utterances of all the different pens supposed to be employed throughout a work of the dimensions of "Delphine" is well-nigh insuperable, and a kind of sameness is perforce created by the reappearance of the author's personality in almost every letter. But when that personality is the personality of a Madame de Staël, we do not find it hard—those of us, that is, who have got over the "*premier pas*" of a plunge into the untempting-looking volume, and are already under the spell of her genius—to pardon such inevitable deviations from the standard of artistic completeness. Variety may here and there be sacrificed, but we are given instead an interest of a far higher kind, and for every dramatic slip we are compensated by some choice thought, some jewel of a true, wise saying to be delighted in and treasured up for ever.

¹ Dr. Abel Stevens, in his "Life and Times of Madame de Staël," points out that the antipathy of Napoleon for the authoress had something to say to the unfavourable reception of "Delphine." "The Government," he says, "controlled, at this time, the press of France, if not by laws, yet by its influence and patronage, and a general attack was made on the new romance. Its morality was questioned—a remarkable criticism for the times." It may be mentioned that Dr. Stevens's generous and sympathetic tribute to the memory of a good genius and great woman had not appeared when this essay was written.

Before proceeding to dwell upon some of these, it may be well, for the sake of intelligibility, to give an outline of the story which forms the thread upon which they are strung. The heroine, Delphine d'Albémar, has, before it opens, made the usual—perhaps one might say, speaking of France eighty years ago, the invariable—*marriage de convenance* with a man old enough to be her father, whose death left her a widow at eighteen, and whose memory she cherishes with daughterly, rather than wifely affection, alluding to him throughout her letters as her "protector," her best teacher, counsellor, and friend. Of the deeper love which is an essential need of her clinging, passionate nature, she as yet knows nothing, save in so far as she has herself bestowed it—or a friendship so closely akin to it in point of tenderness and enthusiasm as to be scarcely distinguishable from it—upon Madame de Vernon, a relative of her husband's; and this in spite of a "prejudice" the good M. d'Albémar had always had against her. But Madame de Vernon was one of those people who, if they choose, can easily enlist the sympathies of warm, impulsive natures. Naturally endowed with the "*esprit de société*" in its most engaging form; as full of *nous* as of selfishness, of tact as of ambition; an actress so consummate that no living being knew, till she confessed them on her death-bed, what had been her real opinions and the guiding principles of her life; she was well fitted to secure the affections of an impressionable young creature whom it was her interest to attach to herself. Delphine, probably enough, would not have been her dupe later in life; or rather—for the woman was not without some sparks of nobleness, and was possessed of genuine, if dangerous fascinations—would have felt the insufficiency of these

things to form the basis of a secure and lasting friendship. But it must be remembered that it was between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one that Madame de Vernon obtained her ascendancy over her, and that it is the crown and glory of youth to be taken captive by the gracious, the lovely, and the plausible—however bitter to its noble generosity of trust be the after awakening and disillusion. It was her love for Madame de Vernon quite as much as any other feeling that prompted Delphine to the generous action which forms the subject of the opening letters. Her friend's daughter and her own companion, Mathilde de Vernon, is to be married to a highly-born and in all respects distinguished personage, Léonce de Mondoville, provided, that is, that she can bring him a dower proportioned to the expectations of his mother, a Spanish lady with the blood of a hundred grandees in her veins, who desires that her son should marry a fortune, "as a means of widening still further the distance between him and other people!" Such a dower it was not in the power of Madame de Vernon to bestow, crippled as were her resources by the defalcations of a man of business, and by her own expensive habits and love of play. So Delphine steps in to the rescue, and makes over to her cousin nearly a third of her own fortune, excusing, as it were, her own magnanimity on the plea that she was made happier by sharing with M. d'Albémar's relatives during her lifetime what would be theirs at her death, and might have been theirs already, but for the aforesaid "prejudice."

Madame de Vernon, of course, knew how to put herself under an obligation without compromising her dignity, and even managed to stipulate—as though she had been the bestower instead of the receiver of the favour—that

the Mondovilles should be kept in ignorance of the manner in which Mathilde had come by her *dot*.

At this juncture we begin to foresee the unhappy complications that are to arise. Léonce de Mondoville is the one all-absorbing topic in Delphine's circle, the more so that none of the parties concerned have ever seen him, and the sympathetic interest which she has felt for him from the first on her friends' account becomes by degrees a personal one, as she hears more and more about him. His character is evidently not perfect. *Habitué*s of the Spanish court tell her of his exaggerated pride; his morbid deference to opinion; his rigid exaction of virtue in his associates—that is to say, according to the stunted moral standard of his age, of bravery in man, and purity in woman; his passion for outward decorum, and dread of the exceptional and unconventional. Qualities such as these were calculated to ruin—as they do ruin—the happiness of a woman like Delphine—a woman so superior to her surroundings, and so much in advance of her generation, that not to be exceptional would have been to her not to breathe, not to be unconventional to live a living death. No one sees this more clearly than herself. It was well he was betrothed to Mathilde—Mathilde, the *dévot*e, whose ideas of propriety and of the position befitting her sex were as inexorable as his own, who was without talent, without *élan*, who aspired to nothing beyond a monotonous round of domestic and religious duties, looked upon society as not the least irksome of duties, and could go through the most critical epoch of a woman's life without a flutter of natural womanly feeling. And yet—all this notwithstanding—it is scarcely too much to say that Delphine loves Léonce some time before she sees him. It is as

though a fatality, against which all contention is vain, has destined them for each other. What she hears of him is ever noble, if sometimes misguided ; his face and form are full of manly beauty ; his character has a fascination for her which she combats in vain. More than one friend couples her name with his. Her sister-in-law and confidante, Louise d'Albemar, who has retired from the world on account of a homeliness of feature and person amounting to deformity, but whose gifts of mind and heart would have given her a leading place in a society not itself deformed by vanity and superficiality, regrets the part she has had in the projected marriage, for she has heard tell that Léonce "is so handsome, so lovable, and so proud (in the right sense) that he would seem worthy of her Delphine." M. Barton, once the tutor, and still the fatherly mentor of Léonce, is captivated by Delphine's sparkling intellect and sweet, unselfish grace, and all but tells her that she is the only woman he has seen worthy of his pupil. Delphine resolves to have no more private conversations with M. Barton, but one day he thrusts a letter from Léonce into her hand, that she may judge how far the writer's happiness is likely to be furthered by a union with such a woman as Mathilde—a union which he has consented to only out of a Frenchman's almost superstitious regard for a parent's wish.

And of that letter Delphine writes :

"Never, dear Louise, was so much that is attractive combined with a style so simple. Nobleness was there, and kindness ; expressions always natural, yet always conveying affection that was genuine and ideas that were original ; none of those hackneyed phrases that express nothing save emptiness of soul ; reticence without coldness ; the simple confidence of a young man in his in-

structor ; a thousand *nuances* which seem of little value, yet which stamp the habits of a man's whole life ; above all, that loftiness of feeling which is the best of all good qualities, and acts like magic upon minds of kindred temper."

Clearly the woman who could write thus, feel thus, of the letter of an unknown person was in that critical situation which is not uncommon with imaginative women, for whom it is perhaps reserved to detect, and to admire with the admiration which is love, those *nuances* in characters they hear or read of which to people in general "seem of little value." Accordingly, it was not without considerable reluctance that Delphine consented to accompany Madame de Vernon (the prudish Mathilde having declined doing so) on a first visit to Léonce—one of condolence, for he had arrived in Paris invalided from a treacherous assault connected with an affair of honour. In the course of the interview he swoons, and returns to consciousness to find the beautiful and tender-hearted Madame d'Albémar weeping with terror and pity. Pity she tries to think it, and he would fain call his emotion gratitude for her condescension to him and to the faithful friend who has never tired of singing her praises. But the mischief is done. The "love at first sight" which is so seldom deep, so seldom lasting, and which is of especially rare occurrence in the case of two people whose great mutual attraction consists in character, has given these two irrevocably to one another. Every meeting of ceremony, before the engagement of Léonce and Mathilde is formally announced, only serves to deepen their interest in each other, and before they have had any explanation, both see that, in common honesty, the projected marriage should not take place. Léonce staves

off all approach to the subject, while he negotiates with his mother for a release; Delphine tries to procure a private interview with Madame de Vernon in order to make a clean breast of her situation to that motherly and tenderly-beloved friend. But the cold and crafty schemer, who has so often battered on Delphine's bounty, though fully alive to the position of affairs, has no idea of meeting generosity with generosity, and sacrificing her impassive daughter's settlement in life to the passion of a pair of enthusiasts. The resolves of a Madame de Vernon do not fall to the ground, and, in effect, the marriage is carried through, by dint of how much finessing and deliberate deceit on the part of this wolf in sheep's clothing may be imagined. Mischievous tongues are set wagging; harmless actions are misconstrued; letters are tampered with; Léonce's one weak point is cunningly worked upon; and a labour of love in which Delphine chances to be engaged for an erring friend is made the occasion of finally breaking down his resolve to marry her. Believing that she is playing him false—for, with all his punctilio and prejudice, nothing short of such a belief would have estranged him from her—he rushes on his fate, and it is only when he has been the husband of Mathilde some months that he discovers, by an accident, how basely he has been deceived. Enraged at the thought of having fallen into the snare which was laid for him, he vows terrible vengeance against the author of his calamity, and is barely debarred from wreaking it, by her timely prostration upon what proves to be her deathbed. Delphine, ever pitiful for misfortune, however richly deserved, forgets her wrongs to soothe the last hours of her quondam friend, draws out her latent better part in a frank and full confession to

"the one person who has loved her" of her history, and of her sin, and receives from her, as a sacred charge, the care of her daughter's happiness. This sacred charge it is, rather than any respect for opinion, which determines Delphine to take refuge in her sister-in-law's retreat without seeing Léonce again. But her own anguish is not less poignant than his passion, and as we read those eloquent farewell letters in which grief, beneath the master-touch, becomes ennobled by its very depth and breadth and utter intensity, we can but cry with a faithful friend at the close of the second Book: "What is to become of Léonce and Delphine? How, with their sentiments, and in their situation, are they to live—either together or apart?"

The problem was one which, most unhappily, they failed to solve. Not all her lover's passionate pleadings, not all the ingenious casuistry by which he sought to prove that Mathilde's happiness, on which she set so much store, depended on his own, would have shaken Delphine's resolve to fly him: even his threat of suicide would have been met with an appeal to his nobler self. But against the force of circumstances she is powerless. He throws himself before her horses at dead of night, as she is on her road to her destination in the South, and, in terror for his life, she springs out of the carriage, to find herself in his arms. She is a woman, after all, and from that moment she abandons her wise if stoical resolution to see him no more. Laying to her soul the flattering unction that friendships, blameless as well as tender, may exist between men and women whom circumstances debar from forming closer ties, she promises Léonce to return with him, and, in future, to grant him those few hours of daily converse which are all he craves. The natural

obtuseness of Mathilde, which has made it possible to carry out her mother's wish and keep her in ignorance of the whole melancholy story, together with the eminently social and non-domestic character of continental life, facilitate their meetings: for a brief space they are in heaven, savouring to the full the cup of sweetness of which they had been by wicked hands so treacherously deprived. The instant, however, that their intercourse gives pain to Mathilde, whether from any remitting of the faithful kindness Léonce has promised to show her, or from the discovery on her part that his heart is given to another, they are to meet no more.

Futile precaution! Most vain safeguard! As though the danger were from without alone! As though it were possible to evade the simple dictates of duty, however harsh, however bitter, without risking a punishment greater than we can bear! Well did Louise d'Albémar, trembling for the safety of her darling, implore her not to stake the happiness of her whole life on what could be at best but a short-lived period of delirious and dangerous bliss.

"My dear one—how often have we said so together?—Society, Providence itself, permits but one happiness to a woman—love in marriage. When you are deprived of that, you can as little repair the loss as you can recover beauty, youth, or life, gifts coming straight from Nature's hand, whereof none save she herself disposes."

The first trouble arises from that vein of jealous sensitiveness in the character of Léonce which is a perpetual source of anxiety to the woman he loves. He cannot bear even to see her in society, much less in private converse, however distasteful to herself (as in the case of an old suitor, M. de Valorbe, who once saved M. d'Albémar's

life) with other men. He does not rest till she has withdrawn to her *campagne*, a short distance from Paris, where she is proud and glad to content him by giving up the homage and distraction of the crowded *salon* in order to spare him one needless pang on her account. But in the sylvan retirement of Bellerive, the misery of the unhappy Léonce grows with his growing passion, and the daily interview becomes a stormy and agonizing scene where love and virtue wrestle with passion and pity, and where the victory of right has all the sadness and almost all the humiliation of defeat. Nothing short of the complete breaking down of Delphine's health brings her wayward, strangely inconsistent lover to his senses ; and then the old story begins again, with added torment to Léonce from the new attitude of society towards his idol. She has been persuaded to return to it to put to silence evil tongues, but the calumnies set on foot by Madame de Vernon have been opportunely revived, and serve as the basis of a fabric of falsehood only too readily reared by a circle consisting mainly of capricious and jealous mediocrity. Their petty frivolity has no time to listen to the truth, even when the truth is put before them, and Delphine cannot stoop to humour them too far. On the contrary, she speedily compromises herself again, yielding, as is her wont, to a compassionate impulse for a person she detests, M. de Valorbe, and once more, by her own act, setting the seal to her own misfortunes. It is true that Mathilde, possessed with the fixed idea that Delphine is her friend, refuses credence to the rumour which couples her name with that of Léonce, as well as with that of the miserable refugee she has sheltered. She even comes to Delphine in the goodness of her narrow, naïve heart, to assure her of her disbelief in the libels

that are afloat. "And what an absurdity to mix up my husband in it!"

She is promising with unusual cordiality to do her utmost to dissipate the scandal, when Delphine, overcome by her kindness, and feeling—how should she do otherwise?—that to keep silence would be perfidy, reveals to her, weeping, her long-hidden secret. Again, the behaviour of Mathilde does credit to her heart, and even to her head. Making allowances for the peculiar circumstances of the case, she raises no hue and cry, makes no mention of her discovery to her husband, merely contents herself with imploring Delphine, for both, for all their sakes, to quit Paris at once, thus breaking with Léonce for ever without letting him know at whose instigation she is doing so. Unless Delphine would promise this last, he would hate his wife, would forsake his child.

And Delphine promised. How should she do otherwise? She is even touched for this once so hard, impassive, frigid woman, whom wifeness and prospective motherhood have softened into something trembling, dependent, almost tender.

And yet, alas! alas! "She who resembles him so little, she whom he has never loved, yet can feel thus for him! And I, who understand his every thought, I, whom he cherishes, I, who live but for him, I am to leave him!"

There follow weeks of solitary wanderings, in which a breaking heart finds what solace it may in communings with Heaven, in Nature's beauties, in the counsels and kindness of faithful friends. Léonce, meanwhile, distracted with grief, maddened by the impossibility of discovering Delphine's retreat, is barely persuaded to remain

with his wife until the birth of their child. When he hears that M. de Valorbe—who has, in point of fact been pursuing Delphine in her exile, and insisting on his imaginary claim to her hand—is in her neighbourhood, he can control himself no longer, and rushes to Mdle. d'Albémar, to extort from Delphine, through her, a promise that she will never marry her persecutor. This promise poor Delphine gives without difficulty, adding a prayer that Léonce would return to Mathilde, which he does, taking leave of Louise d'Albémar with the words: "Take care of her, you, to whom it is permitted to live for her."

Yet, to the sensitively just and generous mind of Delphine, the claims of the selfish, vain, and cruel De Valorbe are real, however meanly taken advantage of. She cannot give him all he asks, but what she may do for him she will, and, in her anxiety to make him some amends, she falls a victim to a ruse by which he manages to compromise her reputation more fatally than any of her rash acts of benevolence have ever compromised it before. By this means he hopes to effect his purpose, and make it impossible for her any longer to refuse to marry him; but he only succeeds in making her take the veil in the convent near Zurich, where she has sought a refuge. The step is inevitable on all accounts. The Superior, more diplomatic than humane, makes it a condition of using her powerful influence to avert an *esclandre*, and Delphine knows that Léonce would prefer her death, ay, even the death-in-life of the cloister, to her final dethronement in the eyes of the world. Then too, she is weary and heartsick, and distracted between duty according to man, and duty according to that voice of her own heart which seems to her as the voice of

God, and she feels that He will pardon her the rash vow that will bring her—if not rest—at least a duller and soberer pain. The novitiate is dispensed with, through the machinations of Madame de Mondoville, the mother of Léonce, who dreads Delphine's ascendancy over her son, and she is hurried into the fatal step a month before the death of Mathilde, in giving birth to a son, leaves Léonce free!

Rushing to the convent, totally unprepared for the shock that awaits him, Léonce finds Delphine, as he thinks, lost to him for ever, and resolves, in his despair, not to survive this crowning misfortune. But here, one of the friends who have throughout watched over the unhappy pair with frank and disinterested devotion, M. de Lebensei, a "philosopher" of the type "who estimate actions according to their intrinsic rightness, and not according to the impressions they may produce on other people," intervenes with manly counsel. It is scarcely necessary for him to point out to Delphine that, from the strictest point of view, her vow, extorted by unfair means, is not binding. The certainty that Léonce's life is at stake is enough for her; and her only dread is, lest, in braving opinion in order to save it, she is lowering herself for ever in his eyes. It is far harder to convince Léonce, passionate lover as he is, that death is not preferable to what appears to him to be Delphine's dishonour, and when he consents to their marriage "because she has consented," and they once more meet freely, the bloom and fragrance of their happiness are gone. All is conflict, constraint, morosity, misery. Léonce feels as though only blood can wipe away the stain that rests upon his life, and hankers after the invading army which is seeking to restore the rights of his class in France;

Delphine has the anguish of feeling that her sacrifice has been in vain, and that she is no longer all-in-all to him. At length he writes her an agonized farewell, and goes off to join the allied forces at Verdun. She follows, to find him a prisoner in the hands of the Republicans, and, all her efforts to save him proving of no avail, she resolves to die with him.

Their souls are re-united in the supreme moment. The solemn night which precedes the fatal morning puts to flight the phantoms of doubt and mistrust, of pride and so-called honour, and, like tired children, half unconscious of wrong-doing, in the simple sincerity of love and prayer and the hope of the life to come, they meet death together. The poison Delphine has taken, imploring pardon for an act that would bring grief to no one living, takes effect just before the execution of Léonce, and they are buried in the same grave, "not," writes the friend who laid them there—"not abandoned by the Supreme Being, since He did not permit that they should outlive one another."

Such is the story of Delphine, a melancholy story enough, and in some respects more painful in a condensed form than when read with all the softening touches, the explanatory hints, the transitions and graduated *nuances* which it is impossible to reproduce in a brief sketch. In any case a melancholy story, a "*lecture troublante*," as Sainte-Beuve calls it in his admirable preface to the edition of 1844, a book not fitted for young vagrant imaginations, unchastened by real sorrows and the solemn lessons which they bring. But, as he goes on to say, a salutary book for many, a book calculated to quicken souls sunk in the sordid cares of daily life, into the tender emotions and unselfish enthusiasms of youth.

"It is part of their great value," writes an Edinburgh Reviewer of Miss Thackeray, in almost the same words, speaking of romances by master hands, "sometimes to rouse a sluggish nature into the activity of feeling, and if a novelist were called upon for his *raison d'être*, he could scarcely find a better one than this."

The nineteenth century is growing old, and we have got so used to sentiment, so used, alas ! to the degradation of sentiment into sensation, into sentimentality, into a hundred foolishnesses, that we forget what a comparatively new thing it was when the author of "Delphine" lived and wrote ; when the Revolution was just bursting the shackles of coldness and conventionality in every department of life ; when the emotional reaction in literature, headed by Rousseau, had but recently begun to make itself felt. We forget what a good thing it was then to feel, and to be free to feel, and if, even at the first, the new liberty was abused, the new rapture enjoyed and indulged in to excess, it is not for us to cavil at the frailties of the earliest apostles of a great movement. Insensibly the mention of Rousseau recalls the prince of critics again, and the charming *Causerie*, where he points out the danger we, of the present day, are in of not adequately appreciating the picturesque pages that electrified a society "very subtle, very *spirituel*, but arid, void of imagination and of true sensibility, deprived of the sap which circulates, and which blossoms each season afresh. . . . Those French readers, accustomed to the factitious atmosphere of the *salon*, those *urban* readers, as Rousseau calls them—they marvelled to feel these fresh and wholesome mountain breezes blowing from the Alps, and vivifying a literature as distinguished as it was desiccated."

In "Delphine" we have an early example of the new literature, the literature into which sap, "*greenness*," had been infused; not exempt from the faults of its kind; full of agitation, of swoonings, of exaggerated demonstrations; wet with as many tears almost as Mackenzie's "Man of Feeling;" a "*lecture troublante*,"—yet no more on that account to be set aside than on that account we set aside Hamlet or the Inferno.

For, after all, here, as in all transcendent works of imagination, be they cleft tragedy or comedy, poetry or prose, the great primary facts of existence are brought home to us with the direct and fearless force which cuts through casuistry and conventionality, through shallowness and shams, as swiftly and surely as the reaper's sickle levels the corn; the perennial claims of our humanity are insisted on, the needs which, while philosophies come and go, *man* will continue to feel till the end of time. As we see ourselves reflected in our strength and our weakness, our longing and our loss, in Dante and Shakespeare, in Goethe and Browning, so here we feel ourselves in the presence of one who is capable of touching the deepest chords of our nature; of dealing with it as a whole, and not merely with certain sides of it; of facing its darkest abysses, and sharing its loftiest hopes.

The writer who fulfils these conditions takes rank, all shortcomings notwithstanding, among the masters who have clothed the highest wisdom in enduring beauty. France has contributed not a few names of lasting renown to the glorious bead-roll, and among them, if she has not already done so, she will one day place that of the daughter of Necker, by virtue not alone of her second, but also of her first romance.

It is with a mixture of astonishment, and I had almost said contempt, that one reads of the outburst of hostile criticism the book provoked. Making every allowance for the vagaries of criticism, and for the sensitiveness of public opinion at the time on such questions as religion, liberty, and marriage, it still remains incomprehensible that the countrymen, ay, and countrywomen of the author, should have seized with so much avidity on the weak points, real and fancied, of her work, instead of proudly recognizing its greatness. Messrs. Feletz and Michaud in the *Journal des Débats*, M. Fiévée in the *Mercur*, Madame de Genlis in the *Bibliothèque des Romans*, were among the most conspicuous of her assailants; the latter representing her as an apologist of suicide, and corrupter of the public morals.¹ Of purely literary criticism, however venomous, it was her custom to take no heed, but the aspersions on the moral tendency of her novel were more than she could bear in silence, and in her "*Réflexions sur le But moral de Delphine*," published shortly afterwards, we have a piece of eloquent and cogent self-justification.

Touching necessity which compels a man or woman of genius to such a task! Strange fate which forces the pathetic "*Humanum est errare*" from their lips, and drives them, as it were, to crave pardon from their detractors for their greatness! Take the closing plea of the *Réflexions*: "It seems to me that people who are honest with themselves feel a kind of modesty in dealing with moral questions, a kind of fear lest they should

¹ The kind of reception accorded to "Delphine" in our own country may be inferred from Sydney Smith's onslaught in the *Edinburgh Review* (1803), a performance which, to quote—with a difference—the concluding line, "would have been very lamentable, if it had not been very ludicrous."

make themselves out more perfect than they are, and that this gives a gentleness to their language which makes it more persuasive. Writers, like teachers, do more good by that which they inspire than by that which they inculcate. As in life, so in books, thoughts delicate and pure may animate each utterance, and be expressed in every feature, without necessarily being declared formally, or reduced to maxims; and the morality of a work of imagination should be measured rather by the general impression one receives from it than by the details one remembers."

That her characters were not faultless, that their conduct served in many instances as a warning rather than as an example, no one knew better than their creator. The strange thing is that she should be obliged to sit down and explain to her public that the business of the novelist is to depict life, and not perfection; to draw characters, not puppets; to represent human actions as the strange medley of good and evil that they are, and faithfully to trace the inevitable consequences of those actions. "See, Delphine herself repeats several times that her conduct is not to be imitated, and it is because of her error that she must be punished."

"I never intended to propound the question of suicide in Delphine, . . . nor do I think that any one could find an argument for or against it in the act of a woman, who, following to the scaffold him in whom all her love is centred, has not strength to support life beneath the weight of so much misfortune."

"My motto ('A man should be able to defy opinion, a woman to submit herself to it') sufficiently proves that I blame both Léonce and Delphine, but I think that it was useful, as well as strictly moral, to show how, with

a superior intellect, one may commit more faults than mediocrity itself, if one's judgment is not as strong as one's intellect; and how, with a generous and tender heart, one may fall into many errors, if one fails to obey the sternest dictates of the moral law. The more wind you have in the sails, the more skill you must have at the helm. . . . I have not forgiven Delphine for yielding to her love, . . . however pure that love remained. I have not forgiven her the acts of imprudence into which she was betrayed by the impulsiveness of her character, and I have shown how all her reverses followed immediately upon those acts."

In another passage the class of persons for whom, as it were, the book was especially written, is specified: "the class who suffer and who enjoy through the affections alone, whose 'hidden life' is not understood by the world at large. I think Delphine should be useful to such, especially if they unite to sensibility that restless and sorrowful faculty of imagination which multiplies regrets for the past, and fears for the future. People do not sufficiently realize how fatal to happiness is the combination of a penetrating intellect, with a heart which feels acutely the truths that intellect lays bare."

The words have a special significance when we remember in how intimate a sense they were written from the heart; when we take them in connection with the "*mot*"—obviously as true as it is clever of Madame Necker de Saussure: "Corinne is the ideal of Madame de Staël, Delphine the reality—in her youth." Undoubtedly in the heroine of her first romance we have a portrait, as faithful as such self-drawn portraits may be, of the real Madame de Staël, one might say of the *best* Madame de Staël, all the splendour of the ideal one, all

the genius of "Corinne," notwithstanding. For Delphine, brilliantly intellectual though she is, is, before all things, womanly. In her the artist, with whom but few can sympathize, is absorbed in the woman whom all can pity, and she becomes a "touching personification" of the author's early years, the embodiment of a phase of life as much more interesting to the human heart in every age than any later one, as morning is brighter than evening, and love more precious than fame.

At the same time, Delphine is a woman before her age, and it is this characteristic as much as any which makes her seem real and living to the readers of to-day. She had not heard of the "revolt of women"; she would have repudiated the notion of "equality," and been suspicious of talk about "rights"; but there were dim foreshadowings of the coming revolution in her breast, and its nobler developments would have found in her an inflexible adherent and an invincible champion. She believes in the social code she sins against as firmly as every other person of her age and country; she holds theoretically that a woman should bow to authority in everything, all the time beating passionate wings against her prison bars; but the very tenacity with which she clings to these convictions, in spite of herself, proves that they were slipping from her grasp, and her life is a protest against the decaying morality which imposed diverse, and even opposite, laws upon the two sexes. Now that that moral code is moribund; now that in the freer, clearer atmosphere of the closing century we are beginning at last to see that a man is nobler for being humble, pure, and tender, a woman sweeter for being strong and brave; now that we bid both alike defer to opinion where opinion is right, both alike set opinion at

nought where opinion is wrong, we have undoubtedly made a tremendous advance upon the day when Léonce wiped out insults in blood, and Delphine dared not avow her sympathy with the cause of Liberty. But Delphine joins hands with us across the years, and enlists our pitying sympathy, saying: "I too should have been as you are, had I had space to move in, and air to breathe." Faulty she would have been in any age with her passion, and impulse, and imprudence, but she would have been spared the galling conflict which actually engenders faults, blurs the moral vision, maims the faculties, and embitters life. In countless passages we are given the author's sense of the harmful influence of this conflict, this friction which must subsist between minds in advance of their generation and their environment.

"Have you not often remarked in life," she makes Léonce ask, "how badly commonplace people agree with gifted ones? The thoroughly inferior get on much better with them, but mediocrity ignores everything which is beyond its own comprehension, setting it down as folly."

Again, Madame de Lebensei writes: "The suffering, which is without result and without end; the constant, hourly intercourse with a person" (or with people—the remark holds good in both cases) "unworthy of oneself, spoils character, instead of completing it. The spirit that has never known happiness cannot be entirely good and gentle; and if there is still a certain bitterness in mine, it is to those years of misery that I owe it."

And M. de Lebensei: "Madame d'Albémar is far too distinguished to be able to count on the goodwill of those who are not capable of liking and admiring her, and it is by her imposing position, and not by her lovable qualities, that she must seek to disarm hatred."

"In short" (we quote now from the *Réflexions*), "superiority of mind and heart is of itself sufficient to alarm society. Society is constituted in the interests of the majority—that is, of commonplace people. When exceptional people appear, it does not feel certain whether to expect good or harm from them, and this uneasiness naturally leads to its judging them harshly. These general truths apply in a particular manner to women."

And perhaps they apply still, in a more restricted sense, all the aforesaid progress notwithstanding. Society generally has undoubtedly become more enlightened with respect to "exceptional people," and is learning, if not to "forgive," at least to tolerate, even in women—

"The splendour of the everlasting light
Which makes their forehead bright,
And the sublime
Forerunning of their time."

But there are still circles where mental superiority in a woman is viewed shyly, if not suspiciously, where the crudities of her dawning genius are rudely checked as unfeminine, instead of being calmed and guided, where she has to wrestle for the "daily bread of the spirit" with the harpies of bigotry and jealousy, of interference and interruption.

For such struggling ones the character of Delphine will always have a strong attraction, and the writings of Madame de Staël generally a special charm. For this author never tires of proving—nay, was herself the proof—that genius does not unsex women. It was she who maintained that "Fame, to a woman, could be only a splendid mourning for love." It was she who

made Corinne say : " I dared not dream that my crowning in the Capitol would gain me a friend, yet in striving for fame I have always hoped it would bring me love." It was she who affirmed that " a secret terror of solitude haunts those women whose lot is most brilliant." A marriage in which the wife cannot look up to the husband is everywhere intolerable to her, and, like her own Delphine, she would not have found her sweetest triumph half so sweet as yielding up her will to a lover whose superior merit she acknowledged. Everywhere she insists that genius is not a thing of the intellect alone, she scarcely believes in its existence apart from goodness. " *Clever* people may sometimes be malicious ; but true genius is almost always full of—*bonté* ;" we have no exact equivalent, for *bonté* is not quite goodness or kindness or benevolence, but a compound of all three, a genial outpouring of the heart's *bounty* towards all. Without ceasing she upholds enthusiasm as the true salt of the earth, the mainspring of all high thoughts and lofty deeds, the " God in us " raising duty into delight, and all things into beauty. For her it is the essence of genius, for without it the sacred fire dies, and nothing but the cold ashes of talent, "*esprit*," Voltairean wit, Mephistophelean epigram remain. The searching, analytic, so to speak, the masculine side of human thought, meets with no disparagement at her hands, but she was in full reaction against the century which had deified it, and it was her mission to uphold the impulsive, synthetic, feminine side which had had no scope for so long. " All that is truly beautiful is inspired. . . . Reason is the handmaid of genius, the servant of the soul : let it get the upper hand, and nothing great or noble will be left in the man." " What is love without enthusiasm ? " that

is, without the spiritual element, that which defies time and change and death itself. "The simplest affections—such as maternal love—can any flatter themselves they have known them in their fulness, if they have been unmingled with enthusiasm?"

There is yet another point on which the author of "Delphine" claims the sympathy of all thoughtful women true to their womanhood. Like her great successor, George Sand, she never abjured her faith—

"Not in a creed, but in a Power which must
Bring good at last to all"—

but clung throughout life with a strength of conviction which nothing could shake to "*les idées religieuses*." For all the revolutionary atmosphere surrounding the one, for all the masquerading in man's attire and the strange obliquity of moral vision of the other, for all the sturdy independence of thought and passionate devotion to liberty characteristic of both, these two great French women alike felt and taught that without a Divine Providence and a Future Life existence was valueless. And it is this constancy of theirs to the prerogative of their sex, the right and duty of woman to uphold—not superstition—but the faith which is a higher reason, that debars us from ranking any third name of modern prose-poetess, however brilliant, with theirs. Not in any far-fetched philosophical sense, but in the simplest and most human of senses, they hoped in God and Immortality. They set their faces like a rock against all aberrations, atheistic, materialist, positivist, or what not, from the two great "religious ideas" which it seemed to them alone gave meaning and coherence to life, and were not ashamed to own themselves beings "at once creative and

created, who must die, and who can never cease to be, whose spirit, trembling when it is strongest, believes in itself, and prostrates itself before God."

"The human soul," writes Delphine, "has no need of superstition to receive profound religious impressions. Love and death, happiness and misery—these are the best preachers to men, and no one will ever exhaust what these infinite ideas inspire."

For many minds, however, the charm of "Delphine" will lie, not so much in its deeper side, as in its more superficial, though hardly less remarkable characteristics—its perfection of style, its fine analysis of character, its microscopic social instinct, exposing the foibles of a petty circle with the most scathing of all sarcasm—the simple truth, fitly expressed.

A single sentence sets graphically before us the real M. de Valorbe, the impersonation of morbid vanity, caring less for success and consideration than for the reputation of them. "He is a man who learns from others whether he is happy."

Half a dozen lines paint Madame de Ternan—the self-absorbed, self-consumed abbess of Delphine's convent—nay, one gives us all we care to know of her: "She has a vein of causeless melancholy which makes her detest real troubles in other people."

With what power is poor old M. de Fierville gibbeted in a few words! the ancient fop, just clever enough to turn serious subjects into ridicule, and to "impose on people who are not very sure of their own sense, by giving them to understand that all who are not sneerers are necessarily prigs."

The character of Madame de Vernon has been thought by some to have been modelled from that of

Talleyrand, and the fact that that renowned politician received important benefits from the warm friendship of Madame de Staël, which he repaid with politeness and phrases, seems to warrant the conjecture. But however this may be, it is impossible, as Sainte-Beuve points out, not to detect a likeness to him in one important trait, the indolence which, says Madame de Vernon, "no one knows better than myself how to make use of. I employ it to baffle the activity of other people. . . . I have not taken the trouble of *willing* anything four times in my life ; but once I have undergone that fatigue, let no man think that he will deter me from my end." We have here, at any rate, a true disciple of the great enemy of "zeal," the man whose power lay in his "patience and pertinacity," whose silence was more significant than the speech of other men, whose inaction was more dangerous than their subtlest intrigues. In her conventionality and charm of manner, in her expensive tastes and fondness for personal luxury, in her power of attaching her intimates to herself with a kind of fascination, Madame de Vernon undoubtedly had further points in common with her supposed prototype. But it is after all a thankless task to hunt for the originals of the characters in a work of fiction. A trait here and there is usually all that can be discovered—certainly all that ought to be discovered—and the best kind of character-drawing is an unconscious process, scarcely likely to be intelligible to outsiders when it is a mystery to the limner himself.

As a fair specimen of the author's skill in delineating natures more congenial to her own than the foregoing, we may take, almost at random, Madame de Cerlèbe's sketch of her father :

"You have heard tell of my father's cleverness, of his unusual talents, but you have not been told of the wonderful combination of perfect good sense with deep sensibility which makes him the safest of guides and the most lovable of friends. You have not been told that now the one object of his great faculties is to do good—in small things as well as great. He it is who expels torturing thoughts from my mind. He has studied the human heart in order that he might the better ease its troubles, and has only found in his own superiority a motive for being slower than others to take offence and quicker to pardon affronts. If he has any *amour propre*, it is that of beings belonging to another race than ours, who should be the more forgiving in that they best knew the weakness and inconsequence of men."

We have seen that with the character of her heroine Madame de Staël had so close and peculiar a sympathy that Delphine has been considered with good reason to be a piece of self-portraiture; yet in the passage of impassioned eloquence in which Léonce sets forth her transcendent charm, we cannot but feel that her creator has been carried far away from all thought of self into that boundless realm of the Ideal where imagination sits enthroned high above—not truth—but dismal fact, the disappointing, vanishing, often agonizing Real. Still, without that close sympathy, we should never have become possessed of an exquisite picture, true to all that is best and truest in ourselves, glowing with the superb yet oh, how tender colouring of "that which I would be!"

"I never imagined it possible," writes the wondering lover to his mentor—before the fatal misunderstanding—

“that so many various gifts could be combined in the same person, so many gifts which would seem at first sight to belong to wholly different temperaments. A perfectly natural manner, yet words always well chosen, gaiety, yet seriousness of spirit, ardour and frankness, impulse and energy, wondrous union of genius and simplicity, of sweetness and strength! She has at the same time all that inspires admiration in the deepest thinkers, and all that is calculated to put the least brilliant at their ease—if, that is, they have kind hearts, and love goodness in its most noble yet most natural forms. Delphine puts life into conversation by being interested in what she says, and interested in what she hears; she is unassuming and unconstrained; she desires to please, but only on her own merits. All the other women I know speak and act with more or less reference to the effect they may produce: Delphine—only Delphine—is at the same time proud and simple enough to know that she is most attractive when she is most herself. With what enthusiasm she speaks of goodness! She looks on virtue as the most beautiful thing in the moral universe; she breathes the right, like a pure air, like the only atmosphere in which her generous spirit could live. If the grasp of her intellect gives her a certain self-dependence, her heart requires support; there is something sensitive, tremulous in her look, something which seems to invoke succour against the troubles of life; nor was she ever made to battle with the storms of fate alone. Oh, my friend! how happy will he be whom she chooses to watch over her destiny, whom she raises to herself, whom she permits to protect her from the malice of men!”

It has been already pointed out that the various per-

sonages whose voluminous correspondence constitutes the book, have all alike been endowed by the author with exceptional gifts. They all, from Léonce, Delphine, and M. de Lebensei, down to Mathilde the obtuse, Madame de R—— the frivolous, M. de Valorbe the small-minded, generalize equally well, and all have the keen insight into human character and motives which, dramatically speaking, only a few of them have any right to. We are thus constantly being reminded that, with all their individuality, they are often only mouthpieces of a greater than themselves, and every here and there we see the jerking of a *ficelle*, and hear the creaking of the machinery which it is never easy wholly to conceal—least of all in the epistolary novel. What business had the recluse, Louise d'Albémar, to make a remark on the nature of genuine superiority which could only have been inspired by a long and varied contact with the world? "Truly that distinction is unmistakable, which makes itself felt even by the vulgar, and for my own part, I always believe more in the merits that make an impression on the world at large than in those mysterious excellences that are recognizable only by adepts."

How comes Madame de Cerlèbe's masculine protest against a too great ascendancy of the affections in the mouth of a woman, of a tender friend, and a more than tender daughter? "No, it is best to tread the path of duty unassailed by these strong passions. They touch you too nearly, they hinder you from reaching your goal, they accustom you to enjoyment which is not the reward of your own exertion, and which the simple exercise of virtue does not procure. You lay yourself open to those heartrending sorrows from which the habitual fulfilment

of duty protects you, and should sudden misfortune overtake you, you could not answer for yourself."

Madame de R—— has more than one sentence worthy of La Rochefoucauld. Speaking of calumny, whose stings she has reason to know something about, she maintains that in the long run it is harmless to the good. "One must be doing—for ever be doing—in order to establish what is false; whereas time and patience never fail to reveal what is true."

M. de Valorbe displays a knowledge of the human heart which one would have fancied wholly foreign to his confused and shallow brain. "They who condemn themselves to outward calm are but the more full of agitation within."

"How should I feel any scruples in the state to which they have reduced me? Scruples are for the happy."

Madame d'Ervin, a girlish, uneducated *dévoté*, who has herself taken the veil, gives a comrade in adversity advice that would not misbecome a grey-haired sage: "You and I have nothing left to hope for. When this is the case, it is best to place oneself amid surroundings still more sombre than one's own feelings. When you are forced to carry a heavy heart among the happy, the contrast is apt to engender a bitterness of spirit which ends by warping the character."

A few more examples of the penetrating and profound philosophy of life which, whether its enunciators be appropriately chosen or no, rivets the attention and interest of the reader to almost every paragraph of "Delphine," and I have done.

The first letter of the book contains a striking remark on what is, with most of us, an every-day experience—

the tyranny of faults. "It is by our faults that we govern those who love us. They wish to humour them ; they fear to arouse them ; in the end they submit to them ; whereas one's good qualities—those which tend to make life flow smoothly—are generally overlooked, and give one no power over others at all."

The disastrous results of forcing people into action alien to their nature are well set forth in the following plaint of Léonce to M. Barton :

"My cousin, in following my advice, followed it, nevertheless, in the most feeble and illogical manner conceivable ; he proved to me that it is hopeless to try and make a man act in opposition to his character. Nature provides remedies for all her ills. The weak man hazards nothing ; the strong man carries through all he undertakes ; but the weak, counselled by the strong, advances, so to speak, by jerks, attempts more than he can perform, as it were challenges himself to valiant deeds, exaggerates what he cannot imitate, and rushes to the most ridiculous extremes."

Of the many variations on that inspired utterance : "A prophet is not without honour but in his own country," here is one of the most telling :

"Fame commences at a great distance from the transitory circle of our private relations ; indeed, it penetrates that circle last of all."

The "agitation within," which M. de Valorbe tells us is all the more rampant when an "outward calm" has to be maintained, was perhaps never more touchingly portrayed than in the subjoined apostrophe :

"Oh, anguish of the mind, how you burrow in the inner depths of the heart that is your prey ! How you devour it in secret ! ay, even in the midst of the most

brilliant scenes. An accident, any physical mishap, extorts sympathy from the coldest ; but an iron hand may gripe your bosom, oppress your breathing, crush your spirit, without its being permitted you to crave by any outward sign a single word of comfort."

The exquisite embarrassment of one of those torturing interviews where you are closeted with a person to whom every tie of blood and familiar association binds you closely, yet from whom you are parted by everything that is aspiring in your intellect, and everything that is lofty in your feeling, is thus described :

"I have been through a miserable time. She came at six and did not go away till nine : I fancy she thought it her duty to spend three hours with me—three such painful hours ! I dared not appear affectionate, for fear of being untrue ; at the same time I felt it both imprudent and unjust to be cold to her ; and every word I uttered was the result of deliberation and hesitatingly spoken."

Madame d'Artenas, a finished woman of the world, gives a striking testimony in favour of the "unworldly" character :

"I pique myself on being able to see through persons who are in the habit of disguising their thoughts, but when naturally candid, transparent souls choose to conceal anything, their simple reserve baffles all the efforts of the most acute observer."

The passages in which happiness as the true law of life and overmuch sorrow as its enemy and destroyer are insisted on are too numerous to quote, but it may be profitable to instance one or two out of the many, seeing that the doctrine they uphold of the *bitter* uses of adversity has not quite so many supporters, at any rate

among us Teutons, as it is entitled to. We saw how strong was the author's sense of this warping effect of protracted adversity in the case of a gifted mind hampered by surrounding mediocrity ; but the general truth, that, however salutary may be occasional heavy affliction, *continued* trial is good for none of us, is recurred to again and again with a convincing eloquence that brings it home to us all.

"Can I go on cultivating my mind, when it is no longer capable of sustained attention, when it only grasps an idea with difficulty, when it can project nothing, execute nothing, without a painful struggle with the one dominating thought? Show me the career that may be followed, the reputation that may be won by perpetual effort! When nature prompts to nothing but grief, who shall bring anything good or great to pass? A stupendous misfortune, it is true, may stimulate the noble mind to renewed endeavour; but ceaseless sorrow is the poison of every virtue and of every talent, and the springs of life dry up beneath the habit of suffering."

"A clever woman has said that 'the loss of hope transforms the character.' I am experiencing that. I had, as you know, a good deal of elasticity of spirit; I took an interest in passing events, in current ideas. Now nothing pleases, nothing attracts me, and, with happiness, I have let go everything that was attractive in myself."

Touching though the spectacle may be of grown men, bowing with the unresisting patience of little children and the nobler part of the brute creation beneath the chastisement that seems ordained, however "long drawn out," we are shown that they err in assuming suffering to be the "final law" of any human life, and that, in the

words of Walter Savage Landor, "the clouds that intercept the heavens from us, come (oftenest) not from the heavens but from the earth."

"A strong desire for happiness exists in all men, which desire hypocrites have represented as a temptation to sin. But in so doing they blaspheme God, for the whole creation reposes upon the need of happiness. Of course one may presume too far upon this idea, as upon every other that is pushed beyond its proper limits. There are circumstances in which sacrifice is necessary, as when the happiness of others requires the abandonment of our own ; but it is always with a view to the greater felicity of the many that the few are called upon to suffer, and, speaking generally, the motive power of nature, in the moral, as in the physical world, is enjoyment alone."

So convinced, indeed, is Madame de Staël of this often-neglected side of a profound and complex truth, that she almost goes so far as to invert the time-honoured adage that only the virtuous can be entirely happy, and convey to us the impression that only the happy can be entirely virtuous. And if her teaching on this head is salutary for those who underestimate the allotted share of happiness in the scheme of creation, it must be admitted that she occasionally manifests a tendency to push it "beyond its proper limits." The melodramatic close of "Delphine," for example, though in great measure explained and excused by the sanguinary times in which the author lived, jars painfully upon English ears, and our interest in the hero and heroine would have been more admiring and less pitying, had they shown themselves able to "support life," even "beneath the weight of so much misfortune."

In "Delphine," as in every work of human hands, the

wheat and the tares grow together, the good and evil are commingled. Every here and there the tender verges on the puerile, and liberality narrowly escapes laxity. Duty, the stern yet lovely "daughter of the voice of God," to whom it is the Englishman's proudest boast that his countrymen have never yet refused allegiance, has not here the prominent place our own best writers have ever assigned to her; misery is too often made a plea for wrong-doing, excess of passion is held a weakness rather than a sin. With all the nobler qualities, with all the subtle charm of the Gallic temperament, certain of its leading defects are here, and if it is with a glow of sympathy, it is also with a sigh of regret that we close this utterance of a soul in pain, this cry for pity of a "*caractère passionné*."

Sympathy it cannot fail to win from all who have ever trodden the perilous borderland between right and wrong—and who shall say that this is for him an undiscovered country? Nor will it be sympathy of the "dangerous" sort in any mind not utterly ill-regulated. For, as the author herself points out, she has nowhere really "forgiven" the leading actors in her tragedy their weakness. Even in the case of the greatest stumbling-block—their "yielding to (their) love" (agreeing, that is, to unrestrained freedom of intercourse), "however pure that love remained"—however cruelly they had been defrauded of its legitimate enjoyment—their error is made the text of countless homilies on the folly of seeking happiness in even innocent love, and the impossibility of finding it—outside the marriage-tie.

"The idea," says Sainte-Beuve, "most prominent in this book is the craving for *happiness in marriage*. . . . It always haunted (one might say *hunted*) Madame de

Staël, just as the thrilling situations of romance, which are out of their reach, haunt and agitate other minds."

"One may cite Scripture," remarks the *Biographie Universelle*, "when speaking of Madame de Staël." "Among those persons whom her errors"—whether political, ethical, or literary—"have most offended, who could refuse to apply to her the pathetic words: 'Her sins which are many are forgiven, for she loved much.'"



SOME IMMORTALITY-THOUGHTS.

“ Du hast Unsterblichkeit im Sinn ;
Kannst du mir deine Gründe nennen ?
Gar wohl ; der Hauptgrund liegt darin
Dass wir sie nicht entbehren können.”

GOETHE.



SOME IMMORTALITY-THOUGHTS.



THE epithet "sentimental" has latterly become a weapon in frequent use amongst a certain class of writers and speakers. It is levelled with all the *aplomb* of conscious superiority at the invertebrate, the molluscous creatures who have been so unfortunate as to merit it. It is hurled with a sort of inventor's pride, creator's triumph, as who should say, Eureka! We have found the right word at last, the fitting, perfect, unanswerable, invulnerable expression! You will wince *now*! You may have had little or no objection to being called fool or traitor. The very emphasis of those terms may have rendered them ineffectual. But you will not care to be called *sentimentalist*. There is a ring of the feeble, the womanish, the third-rate poetaster about the word which cannot fail to be exquisitely excruciating! As error is worse than crime, so is softness worse than perfidy. You are soft, probably well-meaning, but wanting in moral backbone.

You are *sentimental*. In such strains, implied if not expressed, is it the fashion to address a considerable section of our legislators, economists, social reformers, and philanthropists. Poor conies! It were not surprising had they all hidden themselves in dens and caves of the earth, the refuge of feeble folk, there to remain till the reign of common sense, of the masculine and the muscular, were overpast! Yet, strange to say, they have not all entirely disappeared. There is still sentiment enough abroad to be the butt of the advocates of "sense;" and voices are still heard "maundering" about the superiority of right to might, of justice to expediency, of mercy to oppression. How long they will continue to be heard is a different question. The blare of common-sense trumpets is growing ever louder; the ranks of the trumpeters are being daily swelled by names of high repute in the social and scientific worlds; and there seems at times but a poor chance for the ultimate survival of these puny pipers.

No less a personage than Professor Huxley joined himself not long since to the noble army of anti-sentimentalists, the special department of sentimentalism which he chose for attack being the lingering human hope of immortality. In a paragraph of his "Life of Hume" he dismisses this "latest survival of animistic superstition," as it has been called, with a brevity befitting its trivial nature, and in a tone of airy complacence, as though it were a subject that could only be approached in a quasi-playful manner, and to which one even grudged contempt.

"It is remarkable," he says, "that Hume does not refer to the *sentimental* arguments" (the italics are mine) for the immortality of the soul which are so much in

vogue at the present day, and which are based upon our desire for a longer conscious existence than that which nature appears to have allotted us. *Perhaps he did not think them worth notice.* For indeed it is not a little strange that our strong desire that a certain occurrence should happen should be put forward as evidence that it will happen. If my intense desire to see the friend from whom I have parted does not bring him from the other side of the world or take me thither; if the mother's agonized prayer that her child should live does not prevent him from dying, experience certainly affords no presumption that the strong desire to be alive after death which we call the aspiration after immortality is any more likely to be gratified. As Hume truly says, 'All doctrines are to be suspected which are favoured by our passions,' and the doctrine that we are immortal because we should extremely like to be so, contains the quintessence of suspiciousness."

There is, of course, no gainsaying the force of the main line of argument in this passage. Nature and experience but too tragically teach that the mere fact of promise is no warrant for performance, that longing is no guarantee for fruition, and desire no security for delight. Our quarrel is with the manner rather than with the matter of the extract. Let all our reverend traditions, all our cherished beliefs, all our trembling, clinging human hopes be dragged into the fierce light of unfettered reason—reason, the sacred faculty by which they became ours, the faculty which begot and nourished and fostered every one of them. We will not shrink from the ordeal. We will tread, if need be, in the new paths, and forsaking all other, cleave only unto Truth until our lives' end.

But we cannot always undertake to tread them joyfully.

If, during the onward march, we find ourselves compelled to let go, one by one, the things that made it beautiful, that lightened its monotony and helped us to forget its weariness ; if the singing of birds is to cease, and the flowers are to wither beneath our footsteps ; if the staff on which we leaned is to snap asunder, and the dear companions, whose converse gladdened the way, are to drop out of our sight for ever—we may indeed go forward still, but reason itself would that we should go mourning.

Viewed in the light of reason only, apart from revelation, and apart from subjective arguments of the kind that have roused Professor Huxley's ire, the question of the immortality of the soul is still an open one. Men who are anxious to be biassed neither by creeds nor by emotions lean to one view or the other very much as natural constitution prompts ; the stoical, moderately loving temper inclining to complete disbelief ; the—possibly also stoical—but specifically human, benevolent and loving temper inclining to hope. Each, on purely scientific grounds, has something to say for himself. But upon whichever side reasonable thinkers may see fit to array themselves, they, as well as the more strictly agnostic philosophers who practically lean to neither side, but are content to leave the whole matter enveloped in darkness, should have the candour to admit the all-absorbing importance of the question at issue.

A few years since a thoughtful writer went so far as to affirm that “before long a much larger share of attention (would) be given to the subject (of Immortality), and that it (would) form in truth the battle-ground for one of the most decisive struggles in the history of the mental progress of our race.” Nor—when we come to reflect upon the gravity of the subject and its highly practical bearing

upon life and conduct—can we consider the prediction a rash one. It is daily becoming less and less possible—at no distant date it will probably become quite impossible—to dismiss “immortality-thoughts” (*Unsterblichkeits-Gedanken*, as the Germans say) as *not worth the notice* of intelligent men, as being merely the harmless dreams of women and fools. And scientific men whose field of study embraces the whole region of psychological and social phenomena, who have founded a science of soul, and a science of sociology, should be the last to treat with levity any argument however unsound, any buttress however inadequate, by which it is sought to maintain the tottering fabric of belief in a future state. If they bestow upon such only the attention they give to curious “survivals” in history, to morbid developments in physiology, to those odd reactionary freaks of nature that startle the disciples of evolution at every turn, they will do well. In proportion as the pivot round which these strangely persistent phases of human thought are revolving is of moment, in proportion as the question of immortality is of greater consequence to the development of the race than any strictly anthropological or physiological one, will it be worth their while to make every aspect of it a subject for careful and serious investigation. That it *is* of greater consequence to mankind than any other, it is the object of these remarks to prove—or, more accurately, to suggest very diffidently the possibility of proving.

It must be admitted, and it has been abundantly admitted by all thinking minds, that human life, taken by itself, and without any reference to a hereafter, is a highly unsatisfactory thing. And this not on unworthy or ignoble grounds. It has been and is considered

highly unsatisfactory, not only by narrow minds for selfish reasons, but by minds of the widest grasp and the warmest imaginative sympathies for purely humanitarian ones. "I do not believe," wrote Madame de Staël, "that since the beginning of the world a single distinguished mind can be cited which has not found life to be inferior to its desires and sentiments." Such minds have always shown themselves, and in the present day they show themselves more than ever unwilling to accept the figment that life *per se* in any place, in any age, and under any circumstances whatsoever, is, upon the whole, a good. Even assuming that their own lives have been more than commonly happy, that the joys of thought, of benevolence, and of love, have for some of them outweighed the sorrows, disappointments, and limitations of thought, of benevolence, and of love; that they have been consoled by work, or nature, or art; that they do not regret having lived—they still consider life generally a failure. They note with what multitudes around it is patently and miserably such; they know with how many millions of their kind it has been such, and with how many more millions it will be such again. They refuse to be comforted by visions of happier races to come, of a golden age when the span of man's allotted years shall be doubled and trebled, when altruism shall reign supreme over a harmonious earth, when physicians and metaphysicians shall be where witches and alchemists are now, and the teachings of physical science shall be the only gospel—the glad tidings of good things for men. They are not dazzled by the hollow abstraction known to Positivists as the Great Being, and worshipped under the names of humanity, mankind, posterity, or what not, by a large and steadily

increasing body of devotees. The prospect of posthumously joining "the choir invisible"—in the poetic phrase of one of the noblest of these worshippers—of teachers and helpers of men, holds out no charms to them ; for, in the absence of a hereafter, the best that they can teach seems less logical and less forcible than the old : "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." In the very fervour of their love for men, in the very enthusiasm of their disinterested care for them, lies the secret of their discontent. If it were a question of themselves alone, they would gladly consent, with the Apostle, to be "accursed from Christ"—to forfeit every joyous future hope—for their brethren's sake ; but when annihilation is to be the common destiny of all, when the longest, happiest, and noblest, equally with the briefest, worst, and saddest, life is to finish in the grave, to what purpose are they spending and being spent ?

It is surely impossible in the days we live in not to sympathize in a greater or less degree in the attitude of these thinkers. It is one which appeals ever more strongly the more closely we examine it to our reason ; indeed, it is scarcely too much to say that it is fast becoming the only tenable one. Nor, in hazarding such an assertion, do I disregard the fact that there have been, and that there still are, thinkers who consider life worth living, even if it be but a span long. A goodly proportion of the enthusiasts before mentioned, who are bent on the improvement and well-being of the race, have no expectation of a hereafter for the individual ; and it is still no uncommon experience to read in the pages of "advanced" organs of opinion joyful pæans over the decay of so reactionary a doctrine. I do but venture to predict that the position of these

courageous philosophers is not quite so secure as they would appear to think ; that their creed is not of a sufficiently logical character to hold its ground for any length of time ; and that it represents merely a passing phase of speculation, to be replaced ere long by quite a fresh combination of the kaleidoscope of human thought.

How it came into being, and how it has come to be expounded, often by women, with such stoical calmness—I had almost said nobleness, but for certain occasional touches of self-opinionated hardness that estrange one—is easily explained. It was itself a reaction from the more revolting aspects of the jumble of Calvinistic dogmas and dubious ethics which Mr. Matthew Arnold sums up in the phrase “popular theology.” It came as a revelation of new truth and a confirmation of all their best aspirations to men and women oppressed by false or obsolete religious teaching, and panting to be set free from a system which fretted the intellect and tortured the heart. There was a grandeur, a disinterestedness about it which contrasted well with the old theory of rewards and punishments, and would offer irresistible charm to such a mind, for instance, as that to which I have already alluded, the

“Large-brained woman, and large-hearted man, self-styled ”

George Eliot. It is no wonder that she, among many others, embraced a creed of which she felt the magnanimity, and did not stay—shall I say did not live?—to realize the fallacy. It has been propagated by her writings—though not always directly—as much as, perhaps more than, by any other agency, and hundreds of readers to whom Comte and Littré, Dr. Congreve and

Mr. Frederic Harrison, are merely names, have fallen under its spell, thanks to her strong enthusiasm and splendid imagination. But no subtlety of philosopher, and no genius of romancist, will do more than galvanize into life for a while a creed which bears within itself the seeds of inevitable decay. *The enthusiasm of humanity and the renunciation of immortality are self-contradictory terms.* The two ideas can no more permanently dwell together in the human mind than centralization and liberty can exist together in the same nation, or hatred and happiness in the same household. The attempt to reconcile them has been nothing but a noble error, a desperate escape from what seemed a worse dilemma, a passing mood of the disturbed and shaken *Zeitgeist*. The true enthusiasm, the true altruism, the true love and labour for men, are nourished and sustained alone by hopes which are infinite as love itself for every individual man. There can be no religion "truly human" apart from these inspiring hopes, eloquently though the apostles of such a religion may endeavour to plead its cause. Mr. Frederic Harrison may argue that such a religion "becomes at last the issue of our knowledge, the meaning of our science, the soul of our morality, the ideal of our imagination, the fulfilment of our aspirations, the lawgiver, in short, of our whole lives;" but the old "To-morrow we die! to-morrow we die!" rings on in our ears, a perpetual knell, a never-ceasing, pitiful refrain to the high-sounding words; and we still insist on our right to "pursue religion into the bubble world (!) of the Whence and the Whither," or else to cast off "religion"—the allegiance of our souls to good—altogether.

One of the most dispassionate as well as most subtle

of recent thinkers, John Stuart Mill, detected with characteristic acumen the weak point of the new creed. He foresaw that "*the disastrous feeling of not worth while*" threatened to creep into the mind, however panoplied with zeal for the truth and devotion to the race, and he recommended that the imagination, at least, should be allowed to play freely around such ideas as those of "the government of the universe and the destiny of man after death," in order to avert its paralyzing influence. Leaving on one side the oft-repeated fear that the final abandonment of such ideas will tend to the casting-off of all moral restraints, we have, at any rate, in this dictum of a close and cool reasoner, good authority for dreading its ultimate effect upon the human mind. The "*disastrous feeling of not worth while*," in his homely, but expressive phrase, it is which will by degrees undermine our energy and sap our powers, weaken motive, impair activity, and sickly o'er with the pale cast of thought all the higher and nobler kinds of enterprise.

"Ah! c'est trop de résignation, Mesdames et Messieurs!" cried the French prose-poet,¹ who not long since visited our shores, speaking, in language of untranslatable beauty, of Marcus Aurelius, and his submission to annihilation, as the will of the just gods. "S'il en est véritablement ainsi nous avons droit de nous plaindre. Dire que si ce monde n'a pas sa contre-partie, l'homme qui s'est sacrifié pour le bien ou le vrai doit le quitter

¹ Renan, "Conférences d'Angleterre." Elsewhere he speaks of "le sort étrange qui s'est plu à laisser seuls face à face l'homme avec ses éternels besoins de dévouement, de sacrifice, d'héroïsme, et la nature, avec son immoralité transcendante, son suprême dédain pour la vertu." Again: "L'absurdité, la colossale iniquité de la mort."

content et absoudre les dieux, *cela est trop naïf*. Non, il a le droit de les blasphémer! Car enfin pourquoi avoir ainsi abusé de sa crédulité? Pourquoi avoir mis en lui des instincts trompeurs, dont il a été la dupe honnête? Pourquoi cette prime accordée à l'homme frivole ou méchant? C'est donc celui-ci, qui ne se trompe pas, qui est l'homme avisé? . . . Mais alors maudits soient les dieux qui placent si mal leurs préférences! *Je veux que l'avenir soit une énigme; mais s'il n'y a pas d'avenir, ce monde est un affreux guet-apens*. Remarquez en effet que notre souhait n'est pas celui du vulgaire grossier. Ce que nous voulons, ce n'est pas de voir le châtiment du coupable, ni de toucher les intérêts de notre vertu. Ce que nous voulons n'a rien d'égoïste : c'est simplement d'être, de rester en rapport avec la lumière, de continuer notre pensée commencée, d'en savoir davantage, de jouir un jour de cette vérité que nous cherchons avec tant de travail, de voir le triomphe du bien que nous avons aimé."

Is there something in the poetic temperament—the dower, not of rhymesters only, but often of the most robust thinkers whether in prose or verse—as witness the royal Goethe¹—which especially revolts at the idea of annihilation? It may well be so, if poetry, as Wordsworth grandly says, be "the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge, . . . the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all science." Our two greatest living poets have confronted boldly this "spectre of the mind,"

¹ Goethe himself perceived that the idea was untenable. "I would on no account," he says, "abandon the happiness of believing in continued existence hereafter; indeed, I hold, with Lorenzo di Medici, that they are as good as dead in this life who do not hope for another."

and, after wrestling with it fiercely, have pronounced against the modern hallucination that this life, by itself, is worth living. They say with Renan : "*Cela est trop naïf.*" In one of his later lyrics, which is short enough to be quoted entire, Lord Tennyson gives us (probably) the mature result of his thought upon the subject. He calls the poem

"WAGES.

" Glory of warrior, glory of orator, glory of song,
 Paid with a voice flying by to be lost on an endless sea—
 Glory of Virtue, to fight, to struggle, to right the wrong—
 Nay, but she aimed not at glory, no lover of glory she :
 Give her the glory of going on, and still to be.

" The wages of sin is death : if the wages of Virtue be dust,
 Would she have heart to endure for the life of the worm and
 the fly ?
 She desires no isles of the blest, no quiet seats of the just,
 To rest in a golden grove, or to bask in a summer sky :
 Give her the wages of going on, and not to die."

And Mr. Browning, in one of his recent poems, the beautiful "*La Saisiaz*," gives us the outcome of his questioning, his resolve to know from himself

" How much, how little do I inwardly believe
 True that controverted doctrine ? Is it fact to which I cleave,
 Is it fancy I but cherish, when I take upon my lips
 Phrase the solemn Tuscan fashioned, and declare the soul's
 eclipse
 Not the soul's extinction ? take his 'I believe and I declare—
 Certain am I—from this life I pass into a better, there
 Where that lady lives of whom enamoured was my soul'—where
 this
 Other lady, my companion dear and true, she also is ? "

The answer is summed up in these significant lines :

“ I have lived then, done and suffered, loved and hated, learnt
and taught

This—there is no reconciling wisdom with a world distraught,
Goodness with triumphant evil, power with failure in the aim,
If (to my own sense, remember ! though none other feel the
same !)—

If you bar me from assuming earth to be a pupil's place,
And life, time,—with all their chances, changes,—just probation
space.”

One more quotation—this time from a poet, who, like Renan, has chosen prose as his vehicle—and enough will have been said to prove the persistence of “immortality-thoughts” among our higher minds. Speaking of the conversion of Northumbria to Christianity under Eadwine (A.D. 627), Mr. Green, in his *Short History*, compares the effect produced by the new faith on thinkers and on the populace. Coarse argument, he says, told on the crowd. Coifi, the priest, hurled his spear contemptuously into the temple of the old gods, because he deemed that the new ones would *do more* for their worshippers. But “*to finer minds*” its charm lay in the light it threw on the darkness which encompassed men's lives, the darkness of the future as of the past. “So seems the life of man, O king,” burst forth an aged Ealdorman, “as a sparrow's flight through the hall when you are sitting at meat in winter-tide, with the warm fire lighted on the hearth, but the icy rain-storm without. The sparrow flies in at one door, and tarries for a moment in the light and heat of the hearth-fire, and then flying forth from the other, vanishes into the wintry darkness whence it came. So tarries for a moment the life of man in our sight, but what is before it, what after

it, we know not. If this new teaching tells us aught certainly of these, let us follow it."

Has the Positivist of to-day indeed made so great an advance upon the "aged ealdorman" of 1,200 years since—a seer not unworthy to join hands across the ages with him who saw that the best of us "spend our years as a tale that is told"?

It will not be for long that our "finer minds" will scoff at the "bubble world of the Whence and the Whither." They cannot fail sooner or later to perceive the true issue which has been obscured by many accidental circumstances, and even by the very loftiness and disinterestedness of their aims; they must be content to accept the alternative of discouragement and despair, or of the "larger hope"—not merely for the race, but for the individual.

After all, what is that word "race" but an abstraction—a grammatical expression—to borrow, with a difference, the famous *mot* of Cavour? The thing has no real existence. It is nothing but a phrase. The race is the individual, and the individual is the race. It is true that in one sense we have been fast outgrowing individualism. In its sense of "an excessive or exclusive regard to one's personal interest," we are learning to exchange it for "solidarity" or the nobler regard for the general well-being of the community. But there is another sense in which we have continually progressed *towards* individualism, and in which we must continue so to progress, if we are not first overmastered by the "not worth while." In their savage and barbarous stages, nations set little store by the individual. To take the laws of marriage as a safe test of the kind of advance referred to—the conjugal relations of primitive peoples

are always something infra-human, polygamous or polyandrous, or both, and it is *from* a "solidarity" of this kind that progress is gradually made to the only admissible—strictly speaking, the only thinkable human relation—monogamy or marriage proper. At the same time respect for every individual human being, the woman, the child, the aged, the insane—even the criminal—grows and develops ; the perfecting, the healing, and the blessing of every soul becomes the divine task of the true leaders of men ; till at last, in Wordsworth's question—

" What one is
Why may not millions be? "—

we rejoice to know that the keynote of our own age is sounded. Windy theories about mankind, inflated eighteenth-century political schemes for the wholesale regeneration of the species are abandoned for a wise care for the unit, man, and the great truth is recognized that if a nation is to prosper, the men and women who compose it must be good and enlightened, and each one, in his or her proper sphere, a centre of goodness and enlightenment. We have learned, as it were, not to *begin at the wrong end*.

But how if we are giving money for that which is not bread? How if the end of all our pains is to be decadence, and dissolution, and—for all, save the very few—a fading memory? How if, in the absence of scientific proof, it be "*sentimental*" to cling to hope merely? ay, even to torture our hope—poor groping, hungry mortals !—into something resembling a proof?

It seems to me that those whom it pleases so to occupy themselves have a claim to something higher

than contempt even from men of Professor Huxley's calibre. It seems to me that a respectful—shall we say pity?—would better become men of science, “content with their molecules,” in regard to these metaphysical gropers, than jaunty indifference or cynical sneers.

Which of us would scoff at the child clinging fast to its dead mother's breast, though that mother were cold and dead, and lost to it for evermore? Yet it is a thing scarcely more humane that we do when we dismiss as “*not worth notice*” the arguments—childish if you will—by which our stricken nature seeks to grasp and clasp for ever its vanishing divinity—its immortality.

And it is a thing scarcely more rational. For if that be taken from us definitively and finally, shall we seriously, any one of us, find any nobility, any grandeur in life? Shall we seriously value it for ourselves or for others? Shall we be able permanently to set at defiance the “transcendent immortality of nature,” “the absurdity, the colossal iniquity of death?”

Surely not. Surely we shall agree with Renan in the matter. We shall say, “*Cela est trop naïf.*”



SOME NOVELS OF WILLIAM BLACK.

“ ‘I am no novel reader ;’ ‘I seldom look into novels ;’ . . . ‘It is really very well for a novel.’ Such is the common cant. ‘And what are you reading, Miss?’ ‘Oh, it is only a novel !’ replies the young lady, while she lays down her book with affected indifference or momentary shame. ‘It is only “Cecilia,” or “Camilla,” or “Belinda.”’ Or, in short, only some work in which the greatest powers of the mind are displayed, in which the most thorough knowledge of human nature, the happiest delineations of its varieties, the liveliest effusions of wit and humour are conveyed to the world in the best chosen language.”

JANE AUSTEN.



SOME NOVELS OF WILLIAM BLACK.



HERE is a handful of people in this Philistine land of ours who, not having lived under the lingering shadow of Puritanism, and got their æsthetic faculty blunted by its "hideousness and immense *ennui*," have succeeded in apprehending the true function of the novel. To these persons it is—at its very best, understood—something more than an ingenious artistic product. They go so far as to regard the best kind of fiction, not merely as a means of amusement, not even as an instrument of wholesome recreation and refreshment for the jaded mind, but as something beyond and above all this—as a power for great and enduring good, a medium through which minds of the highest order may impart the best which is in them to others.

That such a view of the real mission of writers of fiction should spread with the spread of culture, there can be no doubt that they themselves will be among the first to desire. The true artist wearies to do good as well as

to please, to exalt as well as to divert. In proportion as he is true—in proportion, that is, as he is great—the buzz of popular applause will not content him, nor the consciousness of being regarded as a miracle of cleverness satisfy. In return for what he has done he asks not flattery, not praise, not admiration—but love—; and, were such a thing conceivable in these days of cynicism and indifferentism, of haste and superficiality, he would crave from his public an attitude in which (if I may be allowed the expression) there should be more of “soul to soul.”

It would not appear (of course, putting aside the higher criticism) that reviewers of novels generally are particularly alive to this supreme aspiration of the best of those whose works they dissect; but then, as they would tell us, it is the business of critics to judge works of art from a purely artistic standpoint. With questions bordering upon the troublous domains of ethics and theology they have nothing to do. Moreover, it is of the very essence of Art that it shall not concern itself with these, but that its votaries shall dwell in the far, calm regions of Beauty—

“On the hills like gods together, careless of mankind.”

And I, who am no critic, but, as it were, an idler, taking up my pen at random for a disjointed chat about a particular novelist who has fascinated my own fancy, I may, after all, be only betraying my own ignorance of these matters in asserting the author in question to be among those writers whose ambition is of the noblest, and who have best fulfilled the promise of an aspiring youth.

Yet, where will you find gentleness such as his, delicacy of touch, purity of tone? Where so much tender chivalry, fine humour, “magnificent single-heartedness”?

For the whole of Mr. William Black's somewhat voluminous works I am unhappily not in a position to answer, but for some of them—for "A Daughter of Heth," and "A Princess of Thule;" for "Madcap Violet;" for "The Strange Adventures of a Phaeton," and its sequel, "Green Pastures and Piccadilly"¹—I have nothing, or next to nothing, to say that is not warm and grateful and unqualified praise. Impossible to withstand the charm of his graceful and true-hearted women, with their healthy joy in living, their large power of loving, their proud and tender eyes. What matter if they bear a sisterly likeness to one another—if Bell now and then remind us of Sheila, and Violet of Coquette? A painter may do worse than adhere to the one type of beauty which confronts us again and again upon his canvas because love has stamped it upon his soul, and we should have no great objection to a world peopled with Sheilas and Violets, with here and there a motherly Queen Tita, to plot all manner of Arcadian happiness for the young folk, and charm us with her alternate gaiety and tenderness.

The best men, too, in these novels have a good deal in common. They are all true-hearted, sterling, loyal; and they have all that kind of surface-cynicism behind which your true-born Briton loves to shelter, keeping out of sight all deeper, woman-like emotion. Even James Drummond will not let you see all his heart. He calls a subtle fancy to his aid, and veils his own experience, all his sweet sad longings,

"All I could never be,
All men ignored in me,"

in strange, whimsical discourse, now playful, now gro-

¹ This essay was written just before the publication of "Macleod of Dare."

tesque, now striking unawares the profoundest chords of human feeling.

Once Ingram oddly recalls him, inventing a story with the same charming disregard of literal fact, and indifference to the mystification of his hearers ; and you can see that the proud possessor of the Phaeton and watchful caretaker of Lady Sylvia, is of the same mould, though the use of the first person in the two books he is supposed to indite conduces to a still severer reticence, and repression of the truer self. Is this, by the way, a condition of the autobiographical style generally, when it is not egoistic, and not sentimental? Does it, of itself, promote flippancy, and the aforesaid British horror of wearing one's heart upon one's sleeve? For the rest, we have not too many Drummonds and Ingrams in real life, men who never fail you in time of need, and never thrust their personality upon you out of season ; men who are entirely unselfish, their great parade of indolence and self-indulgence notwithstanding ; who are humble as "gentlemen of brave mettle" can afford to be, and, perhaps (if one came to examine the matter closely), alone truly are.

But if individuality be needed, our author gives us enough of it in some of his lesser male characters—not lesser, perhaps, from the critical point of view, but from my own humbler one. There is the immortal Lieutenant, with his fiercely practical Teutonic nature, just streaked with Teutonic fancy and feeling ; his quaint predatory and pragmatistical instincts ; his comprehensive education, fitting him equally for all functions, from those of musician and lecturer on early English history, down to those of courier and ostler. There is Mackenzie, the old "King of Borva," with his rough exterior and soft,

fatherly heart; his childish despotism and childish diplomacy; his delightful, naïve determination not to be outdone by anybody in knowledge of the world—another pretty safe token of the survival of the child in the man. Then in two well-intentioned, but self-absorbed young fellows, Lavender and Miller (the former, indeed, proves himself capable of better things, yet, in the main, the description applies to him), we have the very apotheosis of complacent mediocrity. The one has genuine talent, and the other his fair share of ability; yet both alike take the prosaic view of life of men whose range of vision is narrowed by an overmastering Ego, and cherish a most orthodox dread of society and Mrs. Grundy. Then there is the Whaup—eager, high-spirited, boyish to the end of the chapter; romantic as boys are, but in a very different fashion from his rival, the young nobleman, who would have been of an introspective and even gloomy cast, had he never been betrayed into an unfortunate marriage.

And all these people are thoroughly real to us. If we have not met them ourselves, we are at least convinced that their creator is on intimate terms with them; that he is speaking to us from out a world, if possible, more vivid than our own; that he is penetrated to the core with that firm belief in his own creations without which the highest kind of imaginative writing is impossible. In the autobiographical books, especially, do we fall under the spell of this faculty of his. As a French critic has well remarked, it is difficult not to believe that the whole, down to the minutest circumstance reported, is not a record of personal experience. The historian of the Phaeton must have been the victim of Queen Titania's domestic tyranny for a dozen years

before they took that famous drive together ; the snug house in Surrey, decorated with the art furniture and art needlework in which the little lady's soul delighted, must have been his—not so very unhappy—home for many a long day before the Earl's daughter came to touch the springs of sympathy and pity in every heart, and afford the excuse for a delightful journey to America. That Mr. Black has visited himself each scene of beauty his pen portrays so well, is matter of course ; the hard thing is to imagine that he did not visit each under the very conditions and with the very companions that we read of ; that he never watched the moon rise over Grasmere, with Tita and “our Bell,” or sat on deck listening to their singing in the twilight amid the splendours of American lake scenery.

It is not a common gift—this of verisimilitude in writing—being, as it is, no mere knack, but a condition of a very high degree of excellence, and rare quality of talent, and it is so peculiarly a property of Mr. Black's best work that I may be forgiven for pointing out the few cases in which he has sinned against it, and given us a stone for bread—melodramatic puppets for living men and women. To say nothing of earlier works, we have a figure in “A Daughter of Heth” which is a flaw—perhaps the only flaw—in that sweet story, that of Lady Earlshope. Her behaviour does not so much shock us by its enormity, as annoy us by its utter untruth to nature. It would provoke a smile, were any one in the mood to smile, fresh from Coquette's pathetic story. And in the “Princess of Thule”—to give one more instance only—we have an equally flagrant caricature in old Mrs. Lavender. Mr. Black has not been without illustrious predecessors, who have fallen into the same

irresistible pitfall of eccentric aunts ; but Frank Laverder's aunt, with her Physiology and her Marcus Aurelius, her sternness and her rudeness, beats them all, and her unreality casts a more deadly shadow over the glowing history of the Sea-Princess, than ever her frown did over Sheila's sensitive face. But what human work is without its faults? I am thankful to Mr. Black for being human, lest I should be taxed with partiality and accused of perpetrating a panegyric where I had intended a fair, if friendly disquisition. It is, moreover, my impression that he has to a great extent outlived, and will still further outlive, the tendency to fill in his canvas with minor characters whose originals never were on sea or land, and who only appear on the scenes to jar and disturb us.

The straining of probabilities in the matter of incident, of which it must be admitted that our author is occasionally guilty, is an error of a totally different character. The possibilities of existence are so unbounded, that there are times when, as Bunsen once wrote to his wife, "nothing is credible but the inconceivable ; nothing so real as the seemingly impossible ;" and no one who has watched the course of any single life (say, his own) at all minutely will be disposed to cavil at such liberties as those taken by Mr. Black with the "unities" of human history. It is true that Coquette submitted to her ignorance on the subject of the mystery in Lord Earlshope's career in a manner we are constrained to feel somewhat unfeminine. It was due to herself that it should be revealed to her, and yet, apparently because the exigencies of the story compel it, she is left for an unwarrantable time contentedly in the dark. A vague sense of the improbable steals over us as we read of her

protracted resignation beneath an incubus that would have crushed most women. Yet to what lengths will not love lead a woman of her complexion? To very great ones, when the thirst for protection is at its keenest, and the agony of solitude at its deepest, almost to the length of ceasing to exact from the man she loves the first debt he owes her—the truth about himself. And it is also true that Violet seems to take far stronger measures to relieve her friends of what she deemed the burden of her presence than the occasion warranted. But novels must have plots, and the plot demands that she—she the infinitely sensitive, responsive soul—should, by a feigned suicide, inflict what she must have known would be a death-pang to a man like Drummond—ay, even if he had never loved her, but had only sheltered her for a single night beneath his roof—the proud, beautiful, forlorn orphan in spirit, without friends, whose wistful eyes would have kindled a colder heart in a shorter space. And our credulity is taxed still further when the quondam Madcap, who could never have taken very kindly to her arithmetic at school, betakes her to book-keeping in a large furnishing establishment for a livelihood, and discharges her duties with complete success, and even without awakening any serious suspicions as to her true character. All this is just a little startling, just a little at variance with one's ordinary notions; but we have soon forgiven our author, and lost ourselves again in sympathy and wonder, reflecting on those curious, impossible tragicomedies we have known—not less unlikely, not less grotesque than Violet's experiences in London. Again, one scarcely knows how Mr. Black prevails upon one to believe that a husband and wife as much in love with each other as Balfour and Lady Sylvia, could sufficiently

misunderstand one another to part as they did. It might be necessary to transport that little colony in Surrey bodily to America, but why base the necessity upon an unaccountable alienation between a strong, practical, great-hearted man and a loyal, unselfish woman, about as little likely to be alienated by all the Parliaments and politics in Europe as a pair of cushat-doves? And yet—and yet—have we not, some of us, known wedded pairs, betrothed pairs, as well-matched, as mutually devoted, who have been estranged from one another by processes even less tangible—by a trifle, a nothing, a fancy more fleeting than a look, more ethereal than a sigh? Something comes between them—

“Something thin
As a cobweb, . . . catching every fly of doubt,
To hold it buzzing at the window-pane,
And help to dim the daylight.”

And so—for those, at least, who have not a good Fairy Tita to take them by the hand—the sunshine dies out of life for evermore.

When all is said, the interest of these stories is never dependent upon the plot. Not to meddle with the vexed question of how far the faculty of story-telling, pure and simple, is on the wane among us, giving way before long-winded description and minute psychological analysis, with inevitable detriment to the novelist's art, suffice it to say that in the case of the books before us we somehow never miss what some hold to be the *sine quâ non* of a good novel. We are too happy with the fascinating creations of the author's fertile brain to think about “action;” we experience almost a sense of relief at being troubled with no mysteries, save very transparent ones;

we are content simply to enjoy ourselves in the company of people who interest us, and in the presence of natural beauties illumined by the touch of genius. One book, "The Adventures of a Phaeton," has next to no story at all, barely "a thread of romance running through its pages." Yet who has not been charmed by it, from the great art-critic who "would be glad (selfishly) if he could think passages of it inferior to what the public praise in *Modern Painters*," down to men whose love of Nature has hitherto lain dormant? For such—and Mr. Black, with that passionate worship of her, and finely-strung sensitiveness to each one of her varying aspects which is his own choice gift, and which he cannot help bestowing upon almost all the characters he loves best, would be astonished to hear how common they are—he has been her fresh and true interpreter. It is well, that, as he himself tells us in a half-mocking, half-serious fragment of autobiography, the other methods by which he sought to place himself in some closer relation to her, failed. It was as though his talent were groping for expression in twenty different forms. But the landscape-painting came to nought, just as the botany had come to nought, leaving behind it only "memories of innumerable and healthful wanderings by hill and moorland and sea shore," and in the pen the young aspirant found a fitting means of utterance at last. It was best so. Books reach the hearts of numbers to whom pictures are more or less inaccessible, and such books as these, teeming with eloquent descriptive passages—eloquent because they are heartfelt—ought to act as a leaven among the herd of mere sensation-craving novel-readers, deaf and blind to the eternal, unobtrusive splendours of the world in which they live. For minds of a higher order, accustomed to

revere those beauties of the universe which they do not understand, to long for deeper sympathy with them, to sit at the feet of those whose insight in these matters is keener than their own, there is unbounded profit and delight in this kind of writing. They may never attain to the same degree of appreciation and comprehension of Nature ; they may continue to feel that she is secondary after all ; that at her loveliest she can never quite atone for the want of sweet companionship, that at her grandest she cannot wholly divert the mind from mournful broodings ; still they will have been taught that at any rate the "setting," the surroundings of existence are finer than they knew, containing depths and wonders, and subtleties and infinite complexities they had not dreamed of. They will have acquired a portion at least of that "sixth sense" of perfect feeling for Nature which in its entirety must be born in a man, like poetry and music ; the sunset will have a new charm for them henceforth, and the distant mountain-tops an interest they only tried to feel for them before.

How happy our author is upon the sea ! One can fancy how, had he adhered to the brush, he would have loved to paint it, in every phase of storm and calm ; how he would have outdone the breezy freshness of Hook and the rich, sunny stillness of Brett—perhaps even given us some such "*nocturnes*" as Whistler's to show us what the ocean world is like when the "confused glory of yellow fire" fades, and it is "left with the paler light of millions of stars shining down on the black islands and the sea." How he loves, as though they were live things, the graceful yachts that bear him—or his creations—it is all one—out into this world of wonders ! In each successive work they reappear, with

their pretty state-rooms, holystoned decks, shining masts and spars, and white sails swelling to the breeze. The veriest landlubber must wish himself a yachtsman, or the friend of a yachtsman, as he reads of those enchanting cruises about the coast of the Western Highlands, where even in winter there is beauty and interest and excitement enough to reward one for any hardships encountered during the trip, and where, in summer, one lands amid a scene like this, "with the sunlight lying warm on the greys and purples of rock and heather, on the bare scaurs of the granite mountains, on the light-blue stretches of water around the islands": "It was a beautiful place to idle through on this bright, warm day. A road, skirting the sea, took them through a wilderness of rock and ferns, of heather and young birch-trees, of honeysuckle bushes, and rowan-trees scarlet with berries; it led them past mountain streams that came tumbling down narrow glens into clear, brown pools; it took them through woods of young oak and ash; it led them away up the side of a mountain, and there, turning round and looking back, they beheld a marvellous network of islands — resembling a raised map—lying in the still, blue water, each island having a fringe of yellow seaweed round its shores. Apparently, the only inhabitants of the place were the wild duck swimming off the nearest point, the invisible curlew that kept whistling and calling each other, and a solitary heron standing among the seaweed, like the grey ghost of a bird among the rich brown." Nor is it only when he is painting what is confessedly interesting, imposing, or beautiful, that Mr. Black's descriptions of scenery arrest and charm us. Often, as we read, we are surprised to find ourselves admiring what in reality we should pass

by with neglect, if not contempt. We are beguiled, before we know it, into a sort of tenderness for those most prosaic regions, the suburbs of London (who ever yet thought of connecting poetry with Camberwell?); a glamour is cast over that edifice of—alas! too many cockney associations—the Crystal Palace; the very earth-banks of a railway line, dismal reminders of philistinism incarnate, become beautiful beneath the magician's touch, and cease to mar the landscape.

This is, in its degree, the Dantesque faculty of calling nothing common or unclean, of accepting the universe as it stands, embracing even, what to minds of lesser calibre seems man's marring; not scorning to take images from man's handiwork (but now we had a network of islands compared to a "*raised map*"); not fearful of the incongruous, and never falling into the incongruous by reason of the intuitive tact—the surefootedness, if I may so speak—of genius.

As regards any direct teaching, moral or religious, in these novels, it is perhaps not the least of their charms that they have little or none. All the good we get from them is got indirectly, unconsciously, as we get happiness from a smiling sky, and comfort from a loving presence; no stern moral aphorisms are thrust upon us; we are not wearied with tedious philosophical disquisitions that leave us in a fog thicker than that wherein they found us. Far be it from me to underrate the value of reflective passages in works of imagination; the unfortunate thing is that it seems impossible nowadays for a writer of fiction to indulge his philosophical proclivities without gradually separating himself from all the most cherished beliefs and aspirations of his fellows. As long as his speculations are merely negative, they

may be overlooked or endured; but when it comes, as it has come so often of late, to triumphant pæans over the grave of our holiest emotions; when, to crown all, we are gaily offered a kind of shadowy metempsychosis in place of the ineradicable human longing to act and to adore for ever, we cry, Enough! and turn with a sense of relief to the simpler utterances of less aspiring pens. Mr. Black's style is throughout simple, frank, and unpretending. Like his own Ingram, one can fancy him declining to entertain any profound speculations on any subject whatever—content to be and to enjoy.

"I suppose if a man were to give himself for three months to thinking of the first formation of the world, and the condition of affairs before that happened, and the puzzle about how the materials came to be there, he would go mad. . . . When I find myself getting miserable about the size of a mountain, or the question as to how and when it came there, I know that it is time to eat something." We are better here, among these "*cordes moyennes*," as M. Léon Boucher calls them, than soaring to giddy heights, and landing at last upon the cold shores of jubilant positivism, or mournful agnosticism, or mocking materialism. The true artist may have visited these in his time, but he will at least learn to keep them out of sight in his work, lest his art should become paralyzed by their chill exhalations.

In the same way he will learn to leave in the background another thing too often paraded by a different school of novelists—his "knowledge of the world." He will lose his naïve pleasure in displaying his familiarity with the seamy side of life, in showing that he has been "behind the scenes," theatrical and other, in filling his pages with disreputable characters and unsavoury

episodes. He will take more delight in beauty, whether of nature, form, or character ; he will set nobleness above acuteness, and pathos above sensation ; he will concentrate all his power to give us a James Drummond or a Violet North.

See how their author loves these two ! See what a store of delicate and reverent tenderness he spends upon the scene where Drummond, having lately learned the wonder of the young girl's love for him, calls her to him to know if this thing can be.

"She followed him down the steps and into the saloon, and he shut the door. She was trembling a little ; why she scarcely knew. Nor could she understand the great sadness of his face as he regarded her.

"'Violet,' he said, 'is it true what he says?' She involuntarily retreated an inch or two ; and her fingers were clenched in on the palms of her hands.

"'He told you then?' she said, in a low voice.

"'Yes. Let us be frank. It is not true—my child my child, you must tell me it is not true.'

"He clasped her hands in his, and for a second she was frightened by the intensity of emotion visible in his face. But her native courage did not forsake her. Her face was white enough ; but she said, without a quiver in the low voice—

"'And why do you wish me to say that?'

"'Don't you know—don't you know, my poor child? Have I kept my secret so well? Don't you know how I have loved you, and hidden away all my love for you, so that I thought you had not even a suspicion of it that would grieve you—all to see you happy as a young girl should be happy, with a young husband and plenty of friends, and a bright gay world before her? And now—

have I betrayed my trust?—but, Violet, it cannot be true—you have had a quarrel’——

“She had been drinking in every word—her pathetic, anxious face turned up to his, her eyes swimming in tears. And when she seemed fully to comprehend the meaning of his words, he was suddenly interrupted. She uttered a quick, low cry of joy, and hid her face in his bosom. The assurance she had longed for was given.

“He put his two hands on the rich folds of her dark hair, and put back her head, and looked down into her eyes with a wonderful tenderness and sadness in his look.

“‘What is done cannot be undone—I wish for your sake, child, it could. I have destroyed your life for you—you, a young girl, just beginning to know how fresh and beautiful the world is——’

“‘Did I know it was beautiful until you taught me?’ she asked, in a low voice. ‘Have you not shown me what it is to be gentle, and noble, and unselfish? When I have been in your house I have been happy: outside of it, never. And I thank God for giving me such a friend.’

“‘A friend—if it had only remained at that,’ he said. ‘That would have been better for you, Violet.’

“Her answer was a singular one. She gently released herself from his embrace; she took up his hand, and timidly kissed it.

“‘You are more than my friend; you are my lord and master,’ the girl said, with a proud humility; and then she silently opened the door and went out. That interview was something for a man to think of during the rest of his life.”

After this, to add many more words of mine would be to destroy the charm of one of the most exquisite pas-

sages in the whole literature of fiction. Mr. Carlyle, we are told, once suggested that Mr. Black should write "something serious." Serious! As though it were possible to write a "Madcap Violet," except, as George Sand says, "*avec le propre sang de mon cœur et la propre flamme de ma pensée!*"



IN MEMORIAM—ARGUMENTS.

“Not for all the artist's cunning
Do I feel my spirit melt,
Not for what the poet singeth—
But for what the man has felt.”

INSCRIPTION ON THE TABLET AT
CLEVEDON.

To the Memory of
ARTHUR HENRY HALLAM,
OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, B.A.,
Eldest son of HENRY HALLAM, Esq., and of JULIA MARIA his wife,
Daughter of Sir A. ELTON, Bart., of Clevedon Court,
Who was snatched away by sudden death at Vienna, on SEPT. 15, 1833,
In the 23rd year of his age.

And now in this obscure and solitary church repose the mortal
remains of one too early lost for public fame, but already
conspicuous among his contemporaries for the
brightness of his genius, the depth of his
understanding, the nobleness of his
disposition, the fervour of
his piety, and the
purity of his
life.

VALE DULCISSIME
VALE DILECTISSIME DESIDERATISSIME
REQUIESCAT IN PACE
PATER AC MATER HIC POSTHAC REQUIESCAMUS TECUM
USQUE AD TUBAM.



IN MEMORIAM— ARGUMENTS,



HE Poet dedicates his Elegy to that Unseen Love which is, he trusts, at the heart of things, in which all things live and move and have their being, which is perfect power and perfect tenderness and perfect justice. He prays forgiveness of this divine Power for all the errors, all the sins, which are in his song of suffering and pain. He prays forgiveness for its merits, and for his grief. And he trusts to meet his friend again, perfected "in Him."

I.

The Poet holds that we may outlive and even profit by our sins of the past, but he sees not, in his grief, how the void misery of bereavement can be turned to account. Unless, indeed, the loss be forgotten, which were far worse, as leaving the bereaved less worthy, if less unhappy.

II.

Gazing at the gloomy immemorial Yew in the churchyard, the Poet longs to exchange his feverish being for a like passionless immobility, and longing, he begins to fancy that in very deed some such petrification is stealing over him.

III.

He doubts if he should hug his sorrow, such a lying lip has Sorrow, so treacherous a companion is she. She clothes all nature in her own phantom hollowness, her own mourning-garb ; she blurs the truth, and it may well be that she should be stifled rather than cherished.

IV.

In the still hours of night, when the will is freed from conscious restraint, and the tired faculties cast themselves upon the mercy of Sleep, his nameless, ceaseless trouble haunts him still. He suffers, scarce knowing why, in sleep. The morning brings with it some gleams of resolve and of hope.

V.

Oppressed by the poverty of language, by the trick of all human utterance to garble that which it would fain express, the Poet hesitates to clothe his thoughts in verse. But the exercise is sweet and soothing to him. He will continue to seek solace from it, conscious of its imperfections.

VI.

He will none of the commonplaces of condolence, as that "other friends remain" to him, that "loss is common," and so forth. The void place left in his heart can never be filled by any other, and loss is made heavier, not lighter, by the thought that every day and every hour it is shattering some loving heart.

VII.

At early dawn, sleepless and restless, he wanders towards the house whose door his friend had been used to open to him. While he muses there, the city wakes, and, amid rain and gloom, another dreary day begins.

VIII.

The Poet likens himself, in his loneliness, to a lover finding the home of the beloved empty of her presence, and feeling his heart grow sick. Yet, as he might find in her garden and treasure for her sake a flower she once loved, so will the Poet cherish that flower of song his friend delighted in. However much or little it may be worth, at least it shall be consecrated to him.

IX.

His loving fancy plays around the vessel which is bringing home to English shores all that is left of Arthur. He bids winds and waves be gentle to his more than brother.

X.

He pictures all the sights and sounds of the homeward-bound ship, carrying the precious freight which he

desires to have deposited in quiet church or churchyard, not in the turbulent ocean. Doubtless it is but the look of peace that beguiles him ; but we are made thus.

XI.

The profound stillness of a calm Autumn morning harmonizes with the calm (if he may call it so) of his despair, and speaks to him of the deeper calm of him who is swayed now but by the motion of the deep.

XII.

The Poet compares himself to a carrier-pigeon bearing a mournful message. Like her, he must needs hasten home, and home for him is still the ship where Arthur is, and still he must be brooding over her in hour-long reverie.

XIII.

He is like a widower, for ever missing and for ever weeping his "late espoused saint." As such a one, between sleep and waking, scarce believes his loved one dead, so the musing Poet cannot always wholly realize his loss. He bids Time and the years teach him that it is real and not a melancholy dream.

XIV.

Speaking to the ship that is the home of his heart, he tells her how he should nothing marvel to stand beside her, lying in port, and see among her passengers the living form of the man he held as half-divine. He cannot, in his dream-like grief, hold him dead. Were they

to meet thus, grasp hands, and talk together, he should not count it strange.

XV.

As the Poet's calmer mood was reflected in the calmness of a quiet morning, so a stormy evening seems to him to reflect the wild unrest that now possesses him. He loves the reckless, changeful fury of the elements—or would love it—but for the thought that it may be wrecking Arthur's ship. Yet fancies of her gliding smoothly in still waters soothe and sustain him.

XVI.

He questions with himself concerning these strange alternations of mood, this balancing between calm despair and wild unrest. Is his sorrow variable? Or do these changes affect the surface merely of his deep-seated grief? Or, again, has his reason been unhinged by grief?

XVII.

He welcomes the dear vessel, now drawing near. Tenderly and reverently he blesses her for the sacred office she has rendered him, and bids all tempests spare her, and all good influences wait on her for ever.

XVIII.

And now she has touched the shore, and Arthur will be laid to rest in his native land. The thought brings consolation—brings, too, the passionate longing to clasp him once again, to die for him, if it could be. Remains to live a life worthy of him.

XIX.

Musing on the resting-place of his friend, the Poet likens his own heart to the tidal rivers near which he lies. As these are silent when fullest, so his hours of deepest grief are voiceless. As their waves become audible at ebb-tide, so, as his worst anguish ebbs, the power of speech and song return to him.

XX.

Or, varying the image, he will compare the moods in which he can express his grief to the garrulous mourning of servants for a kind master newly dead. The children of the dead gaze mutely on the vacant chair, and so his "other griefs within," the closer and more poignant griefs, are mute.

XXI.

The Poet's lament is interrupted by carping voices. One taxes him with effeminacy; another with parading his grief; a third chides him for indifference to patriotic causes, and to the transformations which science is working in the world. His patient answer is that song is natural to him, and that, if his note is sad, it is because his heart is sad, like the bird's, whose brood is stolen.

XXII.

He sings now of that fair friendship, full of spring—gladness, of hope and song, which blessed him for four years. In the fifth year the path that he and Arthur trod together descended into the Valley of the Shadow of

Death. Arthur passed first into the darkness, and, longing to follow, his friend remembers gladly that for him too the Shadow waits.

XXIII.

But it is hard to finish the journey alone. The Shadow will give rest—rest from doubt as well as rest from trouble—but the way to where he sits is dreary now and changed from where it ran through a pleasant country, gladdened by happy communings and fair imaginings and every boon of friendship.

XXIV.

And yet, seeing that no earthly joys are perfect, that there are flecks of darkness upon the very sun itself, he muses if this joy of his in human fellowship was indeed so flawless. May it not be the contrast with his present gloom which has made it appear so? Or else, has not mere distance lent to his friendship the glamour that ever surrounds things past?

XXV.

Yes, after all, that pathway was life—life with its chances and changes, its daily trials and crosses and cares. It was no primrose path, but that which made it seem so was Love, who lightened every burden, dividing it between the brother-souls.

XXVI.

Nor will the Poet cease to tread it mourning, nor tire of thinking of the past. He longs to prove his love

eternal. He scorns inconstancy to the dead, and prays that he may die ere morning, if to live means to grow indifferent to all that constitutes true life.

XXVII.

And not in his darkest moods does he ever wish that his love had not been. He envies neither the captive that never raged for liberty, nor the careless animal enjoyment that has no sense for higher things, nor the heart that never suffered because it never loved. There is a peace which is born of want, and he prefers his pain.

XXVIII.

It is the first Christmas Eve after Arthur's death. The Poet listens to the bells of four village churches near, now sounding loudly, now dying almost into silence. He had well-nigh wished that he might never hear the Christmas bells again, but now their joyous challenge to each other across the hills, their happy "Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace," touch his sorrow with the sacred joy of long ago.

XXIX.

But how keep Christmas Eve, as it was wont to be kept in the days when *he* was among the guests, first among the merry-makers, leader of dance and song and jest? The Christmas garlands are a mockery now, and if they are not banished from the house, it is because old custom too is but a passing thing. The old traditions fade, like all things else in a world of change and loss. Why cheat them of their due before their time?

XXX.

And so the Christmas wreaths are hung, and the Christmas games begun; but the Shadow, Death, is in the midst, and laughter rings hollow, and hearts are heavy with sadness. A song sung once with him, and fraught with memories of him, leaves his mourning friends in tears, and silence falls, till one strikes a note of faith and courage, persuaded of the eternal being and of the changeless sympathy of the dead. So that the Poet bids Christmas Day approach with more of hope.

XXXI.

The Poet's thoughts turn to the story of Lazarus and dwell musingly on all it tells us and all it does not tell us. There is so much that he would know; above all, if Lazarus, during those four days, could hear the voice of Mary, weeping at his grave, and could yearn over her. Why was not more revealed?

XXXII.

Yet it may be that Mary, when he was given back to her, asked him neither that nor aught besides. He is there, and the Saviour is there, and Mary loves, believes, adores. It is enough for her to gaze upon her brother and then to bathe the Master's feet with spikenard and with tears of rapture. And is this not best—at least most blessed—to leave all curious doubts and questionings aside, and merely pray, trust, love?

XXXIII.

Ah, yes! And let those who have not such simplicity of trust, who deem, perhaps, that they have reached a

higher standpoint, fought their way to a purer creed, beware of troubling the Mary-spirits that they know. It may be that their faith, which has outgrown all form, is a subtler thing, but is it as fruitful of good works as the childlike faith of the Marys? And let them beware est, in a world of sin, it fail them in the hour of need.

XXXIV.

And now the Poet himself falls into those sad questionings the Marys know not. He feels the awful doubt if, indeed, there be any future life. In his anguish one thing only is apparent—that, without a future, this life itself is nought, and the fair earth is dust and ashes, and nothing is worth while, save to die.

XXXV.

What? Were life not worth having even for love's sake? If we could know, beyond a possibility of doubt, that there is no other life, would not love still make this one sweet? Away with the idle question. *Love* had not been, but for the instinct of immortality. There had been nothing but a mockery of love, mere careless fellowship, or brutish passion.

XXXVI.

The Poet's thoughts revert to "comfort clasped in truth revealed." They dwell upon the figure of the Christ in tender adoration. Here was a Word, indeed, that all could understand. The simple grandeur of that perfect human life is manifest to all, even to the humble toilers of earth, on whom abstract teaching and high

philosophy are thrown away. This living Lesson he who runs may read.

XXXVII.

But how shall his muse dare to profane these holy mysteries? She is of earth, and not for her is it to treat of things revealed. The song of human love and human loss alone is hers. These loftier themes pertain to Urania, not Melpomene. Yet—Arthur loved to speak of things divine, and so the Poet is fain to mingle some whisper of them in his singing.

XXXVIII.

Again the thought of comfort dies away. Again the note of human grief sounds loudest. There is no comfort anywhere, though spring has come—no comfort, save in this sad singing, which it may be—it may be—that Arthur hears.

XXXIX.

Re-visiting the churchyard now, in the springtime, the Poet notes the tender green shoots on the old yew whose “stubborn hardihood” of gloom he erstwhile envied. Can it be that such a sweet awakening, which comes to all, will come to him—even to him—and touch his sullen grief with beauty? Nay; Sorrow, who still blurs the universe for him, replies, the tender green will pass to gloom again, and dawning hope into regret.

XL.

If one could look on the departed as on a maiden who exchanges her parents’ for her husband’s home, who

is not lost, but removed to a higher sphere, with other duties, other aims, and new responsibilities ! Alas ! she may return—at least, tidings may come of her—but the beloved dead pursue their high appointed tasks in undiscovered lands. When the grave parts us, we are parted indeed.

XL I.

And we can no longer follow, as we could here, the steps by which they mount upward. Arthur's spirit, even here, was ever rising to fresh heights, but now—now—his friend can watch no longer, can share no longer, his progress to perfection. The silence and the loneliness so haunt the Poet, the dread lest their two souls will never harmonize again so chills him, that he cries out for death, if by any means they may be re-united.

XL II.

Yet, after all, were they truly mated here? Nay, Arthur was ever first, and as he led, helped, guided in the past, so may he in the future. And what sweeter thing is there than for love to be taught of love that is also wisdom?

XL III.

Besides, what if death be indeed sleep? If the spirit slumber, as in a trance, until the last awakening, then will the Poet lose nothing. Then his friend must needs love him when he awakes, as humanly, as tenderly as of yore.

XL IV.

If it be not so, if the dead sleep not, perchance they are too happy, as well as too perfect, to think upon the

things of Time. The Poet prays that if, at any time, some little flash, some hint of earth, should surprise his friend in heaven, he would know that it is a message of his love.

XLV.

Musing upon this life and the next, the Poet deems that one use of this one may be the gradual growth of consciousness, of the sense of personal identity. And this can never be unlearned. The man's individuality is the same here and beyond. He has not to learn himself anew in heaven. Thus the dead forget not.

XLVI.

He prays that his love for his lost friend may dwell with him to the very end of life—not sorrowfully, or his life's work could not be done—but still ever in his heart. So that, looking back upon this life from out the clearness and the calm of the other, it may appear all tinged with roseate hues of love—all—not the five rich years of friendship only.

XLVII.

The Poet rejects those theories of a future state which deny the continuance of individual being. A vague nirvana, in which the personal soul is merged in the general Soul, can never satisfy the desires of love which seeks not merely to meet again, but to know again those gone before. At least love demands some halting-place where a last embrace, a last farewell, may be taken, before the spirits fade into the vast.

XLVIII.

The Poet disclaims all intention of handling exhaus-

tively the high themes upon which he touches in his Lament. His brief lays are born of Sorrow which does not reason, prove, define—but, as it were, sports with words. She plays now with this doubt, now with that fancy, as the fit takes her. She would not, if she could, trust herself to more than these short swallow-flights of song.

XLIX.

But let no man think that the fancied hopes and fears with which he toys touch more than the surface of the mourner's grief. He hails every random influence that art, nature, philosophy may shed upon that sullen surface, chequering and dimpling it, like shafts of light and tender breezes playing upon a pool. Beneath, in the depths, the very springs of life are only tears.

L

Hungrily longing for that departed presence, the Poet prays that it may be ever near him, in weakness and depression, in fierce feverish pain and sickness, in moods of doubt and pessimism—not least in death—to usher him into the life eternal.

LI.

Nor will he give ear to the natural doubt, whether, if, indeed, the dead could be ever near, seeing with clear eyes the baser, as well as the nobler part of us, they would not love us less? Is there not much we would fain hide from them? Nay, let them look us through and through. To doubt that they can know us, and yet love, is to wrong them. For they are wise with the wisdom of death, and pitiful with the large mercy of God.

LII.

But does the Poet, in his turn, love the dead as he ought? Do not these baser moods, does not his human frailty, hinder that love, which (if it be worthy the name) mirrors the perfections of the beloved? What boots it to honour the dead with the lips only, not the life? Alas! no ideal, no example, can wholly banish sin and error from mortal life. The Spirit of true love rebukes the doubter, and bids him patiently endure till Time shall sift the evil from the good.

LIII.

It may even be that the errors and follies of youth are but the redundancy of a richly-endowed nature, that without them a man's soberer after-life would be barren of good. But it behoves us to take care how we preach such a doctrine to the young, and, in general, to see that such philosophizing confuse not for us the simple outlines of truth and right.

LIV.

To hope that all evil will somehow, somewhen, turn to good, is inevitable. We know not anything, but we can trust that error and folly and sin and suffering are "good, only misunderstood;" that they serve some purpose as yet unknown to us; that no meanest creature suffers uselessly or only vicariously; that at last—at last—every winter will change to spring, and every living thing be blessed. Yet is this but a hope, but a dream, but the cry of a child in the night.

LV.

Is not the desire for a future existence, where the broken threads of this one may be taken up again, the thing that is most divine in us? Yet how is it negatived by nature at every turn! She cares only for the type, not for the individual, and the Poet beholding everywhere the cynicism and the callousness of her operations, falters, and cries but tremblingly to that Power of Love behind nature, faintly trusting the larger hope.

LVI.

For indeed, viewed more closely, nature appears careless even of the type. With her, the species, as well as the individual, is transitory, and why should humanity be exempt from her law of evanescence, of annihilation? To the Poet, in his despair, there seems no escape from the frailty and futility of a life for whose duration nature gives no warrant, and he cries aloud for the voice of his friend to allay the anguish of the most torturing of doubts. His own heart answers that it can be quieted only behind the veil.

LVII.

Once more the Poet strives to bid farewell, as it were, to his friend's grave, to leave his wild singing, and turn to the work of life. For his dirge, he fears, can neither do honour to the dead, nor yet profit himself. Yet how can he work in the world? Half his life is gone. His task will be to listen to an everlasting funeral knell, ringing a perpetual Ave, an endless Adieu.

LVIII.

This eternal knell of Ave and Adieu it is which the Poet has been translating into song—his song of farewell to his friend—and, indeed, to life. And what has that song availed, save to vex, like the slow dropping of water in some dank vault, hearts already vexed by their mortality? The high Muse exhorts the Poet to patience, and bids him live to commemorate his love and grief in worthier fashion.

LIX.

He prays Sorrow, if, indeed, she will abide with him always, to sometimes assume less harsh and cruel forms than those which she habitually puts on. Then, indeed, he may hope to do good work, so concealing her (although she will be ever there) that her voice will be unheard by others in his singing, and he alone of all the world will know that Sorrow is his bride.

LX.

Seeking again for some image of his love for Arthur, he likens it to that of a poor village girl for one in a higher station than her own. As such a one would pine in restless solitude while her love mingled with his peers, so does he fret, and doubt, and weep, half jealously comparing the baseness of his state with the gloriousness of Arthur's.

LXI.

In Arthur's happy second state, it may be that he holds converse with the mighty dead, with Plato, Dante,

Shakespeare. Alas! if this be so, how dwarfed must his old friend of earth be in his sight! And yet he proudly pleads to be remembered; for love is love, and not the soul of Shakespeare could love Arthur more than did and does his friend.

LXII.

Though, if to remember him could in any wise trouble Arthur's joy, he would have his love forgotten or recalled but as some foolish first love is recalled by one who lives to wed an equal mind.

LXIII.

And yet why should he fear that to remember him with pitying tenderness could harass Arthur in his exalted sphere? His own compassionate love for the lower animals does not hinder his heavenward aspiration; and supposing Arthur to stand to him in the relation in which he stands to them, may it not be that Arthur can spare him love—not impairing his higher tasks, his loftier enjoyments?

LXIV.

Still brooding on all the possible relations of his lost friend to the life and the love that he has left, the Poet now compares him to some genius of lowly birth, who should leave his obscure home to rise to the highest offices of state, and should sometimes, in the midst of his greatness, remember, as in a dream, the dear scenes of old, and, it may be, the humble villager who was his chosen playmate.

LXV.

But it shall be as that sweet soul wills. The Poet, now in happier mood, convinced that love cannot be lost, but must live on everlastingly, trusts to his constancy, and to the efficacy of that high friendship, even rising to the joyful faith that, as Arthur is still a power in his own life, so his own influence may yet be working to noble ends in Arthur.

LXVI.

To one who had thought him warped with sorrow, and marvelled to see him sometimes gay among the gay, the Poet shows that the loss which has made a desert in his mind has not embittered him. He feels gently to all. He is as one become blind—not uncheerful—although the sense of his privation is ever with him.

LXVII.

The moonlight falling on his bed, brings fancies of how it also falls upon the church by the sea where rests the beloved dead, illuminating with mystic glory the inscription on his tablet. At early dawn the Poet's waking thoughts revert to the same spot, and picture the marble whitening in the growing light.

LXVIII.

But although he may think upon the dead in the night, he cannot dream of his friend as dead. In dreams the two walk together as of yore, and sleep knows nothing of

death. Only sometimes there is a trouble on Arthur's face. How is this? The thing perplexes the Poet in his dream, but, waking, he discerns that it is nothing but the trouble of his own heart, which, dream-fashion, is transferred to the face of his companion.

LXIX.

One strange dream he has, which, for all it is weird and hard to understand, brings him rest. In it it seems to him that he has chosen, that he is wearing the crown of thorns, the heritage of prophet and martyr. And all the people flout him. But one, of angelic face and form, transforms it with a touch, to a victor's crown, speaking mystic words of comfort.

LXX.

Often he strives, between sleep and waking, to recall the features of the departed. But they are blurred by the crowding fancies and visions of that state. It is only when all striving ceases, and the will is passive, that, unexpectedly, the fair face shines forth and calms his soul.

LXXI.

At last—at last—after many a perturbed dream, many a fantastic vision, capricious Sleep is kind to the Poet, bringing back vividly, one blessed night, a happy summer holiday in France, with Arthur. He bids sleep return and bring a stronger opiate still, if haply the very words that they were wont to say to one another in those days of joyful intercourse may be said again.

LXXII.

It is the first anniversary of Arthur's death. The morning breaks in angry gusts of rain and wind ; and the desolation of a September storm is over all the land. But had that day dawned in peaceful summer splendour, or amid soft autumnal breezes, to the Poet it would have seemed as dark, as desolate, as now. He bids it hasten, like a thing of guilt, to its lugubrious end.

LXXIII.

The Poet's thoughts are turned to fame. While lamenting that his friend was "too early lost for public fame," he muses what a vain thing fame is at the best, in a vast universe, composed of many worlds and as immeasurable in duration as in extent. Our task here, and the renown it brings, may be left with God. A man's true crown of rejoicing is not in any fading renown that he may win, but in that divine inward force which, whether it come to full fruition here or no, is his best possession.

LXXIV.

Yet that Arthur, had he lived, would have earned the brightest fame the world can give, becomes more and more apparent to his friend. As watchers by the dead oft-times perceive a growing likeness to some kinsman, so Arthur's kinship with the great ones of earth becomes more manifest, the more he meditates on him. But what avails to speak of it ? He has passed to the silent land.

LXXV.

The Poet's grief is the best measure of his friend's

greatness. Even had he tried to express the inexpressible, and hymn that greatness instead of merely singing his own sorrow, he must have failed. Nor would the world have listened, the world that heeds only "things done that took the eye and had the price." Here silence shall best guard his fame. But somewhere—beyond the veil—those high tasks which Arthur is fulfilling are being wrought amid the praise they merit.

LXXVI.

Still the Poet broods upon fame—notably the fame of the singer. What immortality has verse? If the poetry of the world's youth, of Homer and of the Psalms, lives on, what chance, at least, has modern song of lengthened life? This grows old while oak and yew are still young; and when they are old, where is it?

LXXVII.

With small hope for the duration of modern rhyme in general, and with a too lowly estimate of his own, he foretells a sorry fate for the Lament with which he soothes his pain. Yet utter it he must, for song is second nature to the Poet, and sweeter is it to him to sing his love and grief than to try higher flights, if haply he might win a transient fame.

LXXVIII.

Christmas again. A frost holds the earth in stillness, and the silent-falling snow and all the icy calm of nature harmonize with, while they intensify the profound inward sense of loss. Outwardly it is as though this sense had

grown less keen. The Christmas revels proceed as usual; there are no external marks of distress. Can it be that the grief which is love has become deadened with time? The heart answers—no. Such grief becomes a part of us, an element in our complex being, and it lives on in the spirit's depths, for all our tears are dry.

LXXIX.

The Poet fears lest that line sung long ago,

“More than my brothers are to me,”

may have wounded a beloved brother who is also a brother-poet, and who has the very strongest claim on his affections. He shows him how it must not grieve him that he could say his friend was more to him than any brother. For they two were ever as one soul, but Arthur's nature was complementary to his own. He supplied that which was lacking to the Poet, the very difference between them knitting them in closest friendship.

LXXX.

Sometimes he half wishes that it had been his lot to be removed by death from Arthur's side, instead of having been the one to be left mourning. At such times his fancy tries to picture how Arthur would have borne the sorrow that has brought himself so much unrest. He knows that it would have been nobly borne, and calmly, howsoever deep; and from such imaginings he draws consoling lessons of a like sublime submission to the will of God.

LXXXI.

Satisfied that time would but have added to the treasure of his love, each year unfolding and maturing it, he finds in such conviction food for an ever-growing grief. But presently the sweet thought comes: Did not Death accomplish in an instant the work of the years, ripening at a touch the love that, but for him, would have developed slowly?

LXXXII.

The faith that that grand spirit lives, and lives to noble purpose elsewhere, is so strong in him, that his mind dwells not with any bitterness upon the horrors of the grave. Nor will he chide Death in that he bore so sweet a soul to a diviner sphere. His quarrel with Death is only this, that the two friends—both energizing still—are severed, are no longer within sound of one another's voices.

LXXXIII.

With the dawning of the New Year, fresh hope quickens in the Poet's breast. He would fain hasten its laggard footsteps, longing for the flowers of spring and for the glory of summer. Can trouble live in the spring—the season of life and love and music? Let the spring come, and he will sing for Arthur a sweeter, richer requiem.

LXXXIV.

The Poet's fancy draws with tender touches the outline of the earthly life that would have been Arthur's, had he lived. Especially he dwells upon that marriage

which would have linked the friends still more closely together, making them brothers indeed. A thousand endearing and inspiring visions are called up by this train of thought—but, alas ! in the end, it does but re-open the old wound, and break the low beginnings of content.

LXXXV.

In answer to one who questions him of the effect of his grief upon his character and life, he shows that his long mourning has neither dimmed his faith, nor maimed his powers of loving, nor quenched in him the thirst for noble deeds. The spirit of his friend breathes on in him, turning sorrow into strength. At times it even seems as though he bade him solace himself with a new friendship—not a friendship which should supplant the first supreme and sacred one which is eternal—but one which should sweeten the years of separation with the blessedness of human sympathy. Such a friendship he gladly offers him to whom he speaks.

LXXXVI.

On a certain evening, balmy and glorious, after a day of showers, when a fresh breeze has chased away the rain-clouds, and the western sky is clothed in crimson, the Poet,—rapt,—tastes, well-nigh for the first time, of peace.

LXXXVII.

Re-visiting the University where they two, with a band of chosen friends, so often held debate, the memory of Arthur's pre-eminence among that little band, of his inspired discourse, his trenchant logic, his illumined

countenance, returns with a new vividness. Each common sight, and sound of college and of town speaks only of him.

LXXXVIII.

The Poet bids the nightingale unfold the secret of that tumultuous passion of song which seems now mournful, now exultant; half-despairing, half-enraptured. Like the "most melancholy bird," he is not all unhappy. His passion, too, enfolds a secret joy. The beauty and the glory of the universe begin to dominate his grief.

LXXXIX.

The Poet's birthplace and early home is full of associations with Arthur. Thinking of him there, the Poet calls up a series of sweet pictures of happy summer hours, when Arthur fled from the stir and din of town to that cool retreat, revelling in the shade of the lofty trees and in all country joys. Something of the calm and bliss of those far-off days steals over him as he tells of their delights—the country pleasures, and the pleasures of the soul and mind partaken of together.

XC.

Emphatically and solemnly he repudiates the thought that, could the beloved dead return to us, after howsoever long an interval, after whatsoever changes in our lives and in our homes, their presence could be unwelcome to us. He who first uttered such a thought could have known little of love. Suddenly, indignant remonstrance melts into a cry of longing.

XCI.

Again the cry of longing—the yearning “Come!” and once more, “Come!” But the spring is here, and the summer at hand, and the season speaks of hope, not desolation, and entreaty melts almost into triumph, as fancy pictures the prayer answered, and that beloved form revealed—not in watches of the night—but in a glory of sunshine.

XCII.

Yet, were the vision granted, were the image of Arthur, as he knew him, verily to appear to him, would he believe that it was his friend indeed? Even though the spirit recalled the past and foretold the future, how could he prove that his fancied words were not merely the memories or presentiments of his own mind? that the whole was not some juggle of his own brain?

XCIII.

No—such visions, apparitions, are not. We shall not—with our bodily eyes—behold the departed. But surely, surely, some finer, more intangible communion may be—spirit to spirit, ghost to ghost. In passionate invocation, the Poet pleads with his lost friend so to commune—soul to soul—with him.

XCIV.

The calmer the spirit, the purer, the more at peace with God and man, the more possible it becomes that such holy intercourse should be vouchsafed. The heavenly spirits, themselves at peace, cannot make themselves heard in a tempestuous heart.

XCV.

On a still, warm summer night, so still that tapers burned without, and that talk and song had been carried on upon the lawn till late, the Poet, left, at length, alone, reads and re-reads the letters of the dead. There, in the night, the constant, changeless love of Arthur, and his courageous faith, boldly grappling with the doubts that few men dare to face, strike him with fresh amaze, and he muses upon that grand spirit, until, at last, it seems to descend upon his own, and he is rapt with it, in blissful trance. Doubt rudely wakens him, but doubt prevails not. It is presently quieted by a fair dawn, big with prophecy of glorious day.

XCVI.

His thoughts revert to the subject of doubt. To one who, herself the soul of gentle pity, has no sympathy with doubt and no mercy on doubters; he tells how Arthur, the type of noble manhood, fearlessly entered the realm of darkness, and faced the phantoms there, and quelled them by force of moral courage and perfect purity of heart, so fighting his way to a truer faith.

XCVII.

Turn where he may, the Poet sees his love reflected in all the universe. Rocks, trees, and mountains have often furnished him with images of it, and human life is full of parallels to it. To-day he sees it figured in an unequal marriage, where a certain separation of life has come without estrangement, and a degree of dissimilarity

involves no loss of love. The friend gone before is like a husband absorbed in profound contemplation or scientific research; the friend left behind is as a simple-hearted wife, faithful still, loving still, knowing nothing, but hoping all things, believing all things.

XCVIII.

The departure of a friend for Vienna directs his thoughts to that fateful city, and to the way thither, and that beautiful Rhine where he once sailed with Arthur. Of Vienna herself he can have no thought that is not heavy with anguish. In vain he calls to mind how Arthur himself praised her splendour, and her light-hearted, genial merry-making. She is the type of pain and loss to him.

XCIX.

It is the second anniversary of Arthur's death. This year the dawn is calm and beautiful with the beauty of early Autumn. The Poet, waking, ponders on all the myriad souls to whom this balmy morning will bring memories of bridal, birth, and death. With all those fellow-creatures—by far the greater number—who will this day think upon their dead, he feels himself in mystic sympathy.

C.

The time draws near when the Poet—he and his—must leave his birthplace and early home. Gazing from a neighbouring hill at the dear, familiar landscape where the happiest season of life was passed, and where the two friends roamed together, every feature of it recalls the enjoyment of the one departed. To leave the place is like a second death and loss of him.

CI.

In the garden, looking round on tree and shrub and flower and brook—all the friends of many years—a fresh pang comes with the sight of each. All these will be unwatched, unloved, uncared-for ; till, perhaps, they find a home in a stranger's heart, growing dear to him and his, while the memory fades of those who love them now.

CII.

The hour of departure has struck. Roaming for the last time in the garden, the Poet feels two passions of his life contend within his breast for mastery, the love of the home of boyhood which he is leaving, and the love of the friend whose happiest hours in later times were spent there. Which association most hallows the place ? He knows not, but, as he turns to go, both memories melt into an unmixed pain.

CIII.

The Poet tells how, on the last night before leaving, a dream of beauty and of high import consoles him. In mystic vision he beholds Arthur, veiled, as the soul and the inspirer of every high poetic gift of his—typified by the maidens of his dream. These grow with his growth, till Here becomes Hereafter. Nor are they parted from him then. Arthur, no longer concealed from sight, and grown, he too, into the fulness of the stature of the perfect man, receives them, with him, into the life beyond.

CIV.

It is the third Christmas Eve since Arthur's death. On the first, four voices from four church-towers round the old home had sung Peace and Goodwill to the mourner. To-night, in the new home, but one peal of church-bells is heard. All is desolate and new and strange, and, cut off from sacred human memories, the very season loses half its sanctity.

CV.

Nor shall the house be decked with Christmas wreaths to-night. That tribute, paid half-grudgingly, half-tenderly, to use and wont for two years past, is needless here, in the strange dwelling. Grief shall not here be mocked with dance and revel; but a solemn silence shall prevail, and a holy memory shall reign in quietness. Let but the petty cares of daily life be suspended for a while, and nothing mar that sacred calm. The Poet will have no stir, no motion, anywhere—save the perpetual motion of those great cosmic forces which, un-hasting and un-resting, are ever working together for good.

CVI.

On New Year's Eve the Poet once more listens to the church-bells, filled with all holy aspiration, and with strong hope for that closing cycle, rich in good. And among the evil things which he bids disappear with the revolutions of the years is the grieving overmuch for those gone before. This must be stilled, if we would work with our might to bring in the happier day when the good shall triumph and the Christ that is to be shall reign.

CVII.

Again, as often of late, the Poet sounds a note of courage and good cheer. It is Arthur's birthday, a winter's day of piercing cold and gloom; but he will have it kept with festal honours. The songs Arthur loved shall be sung to-day; Yule logs shall blaze and wine shall flow, and the cheery talk shall be as though he were by.

CVIII.

More and more convinced is he that if sorrow is indeed to bear the peaceable fruit of righteousness in him, he must no longer brood over it in solitude. In lonely musings, the Solitary is too apt to see himself reflected wheresoever he turns his eyes. His own image is shadowed on the very heights of heaven to which he yearns, and pondering on the grave, he does but read his own thoughts into the mysteries of death. Only among our kind, in human sympathy, and human fellowship, and human striving, can sorrow turn to profit.

CIX

His thoughts perpetually revert to his fair ideal of wisdom, and of all human grace and goodness. After all, how should he turn away his eyes from the grave, since there his pattern lies, the man who combined the best gifts of man and woman in his own person, power and gentleness, passion and purity, the love of country and the love of children. Truly, he who should not learn wisdom from the bright influence of such a character would seek it in vain from any other teacher.

CX.

Musing still upon his sweet perfection, now one accept and now another of that many-sided, richly-endowed nature appeals to him. How magical was the charm of his presence ! alluring to young and old alike, and working upon each according to the needs and capacities of each. The weak his converse strengthened ; the proud it tamed ; the foolish shamed. In the friend of his heart it kindled passionate love, and the emulation that is born of love.

CXI.

Nor had this man any need to strain after those polished courtesies of daily life, that unflagging urbanity of manner and unshaken grace and kindness of demeanour which some do but assume, and which few wear always without any break or lapse. For there was in him more graciousness than he could show, and, brushing all things rude and base aside, he *was* the thing that others *seem*.

CXII.

One whom the Poet reverences deeply chides him for a seeming blindness to any lesser merit than the surpassing merit of him whose perpetual elegy he sings. But all his field of vision is occupied by his image. It was so while he lived. To watch the development of such a character, so rich and fertile, yet so well governed, was a task all absorbing, excluding every other.

CXIII.

That lofty wisdom that died with him—how gloriously it would have served, not his friends alone, but his

country! co-operating with all that was best in the travailing Spirit of the Age, but withstanding the revolution of mere selfishness and unrest, and the change which is not progress.

CXIV.

From thoughts of wisdom, the Poet turns to contemplate that younger sister of wisdom, knowledge, whom, while he loves even passionately, he fears to see divorced from her heavenly guide. Ah! if the world, which more and more tends to worship knowledge, apart from wisdom, were but as Arthur, whom knowledge never puffed up, but in whom every beautiful grace of the spirit grew with the growth of the understanding.

CXV.

Another spring has come, and all its lovely sights and sounds wake answering chords in the Poet's breast. The life within him stirs and quickens in responsive harmony with the world without. But his regret, too, blossoms like a flower.

CXVI.

Yet it is not now an unmixed regret. Those vivid impulses of spring are not all sad. Rather, the joyous resurrection of life around re-awakens hope and trust. It is to a future tie of lasting blessedness with Arthur rather than to the severed tie of bygone days that his quickened yearning points.

CXVII.

There is even a sort of rapture in the thought that the very separation will make the meeting, when that new

bond shall be entered into, sweeter. It may be that the very mission and purpose of these parted days is to enhance the delight of the nearness that shall be.

CXVIII.

Full of deep lessons are these days and hours. Who can think upon the gradual forming of this wondrous earth out of a sea of fire, until, at the last, man, the crowning work of Time, arose, and believe in man's annihilation? Then would the whole mystery of Evolution be without a meaning. Nay, the dead live and work, and it is for us who remain to typify, each one in his own person, the grand scheme of Nature, ever striving upward, ever seeking to subdue the lower to the higher.

CXIX.

Once again, at early dawn, the Poet stands before the house that was Arthur's home. But he does not now gaze upon it in blank dismay and gloom. Here too, in the heart of the mournful city, the sweet influences of spring pursue him—the spring without, and the spring of awakened trust and calmed regret and softened memories within.

CXX.

He returns—how should he do other?—to that pivot of the soul's desires, the hope of a hereafter. If, indeed, the physical aspect of our being be all, then is his faith vain. For his part—however it may be with others—once that cruel doctrine indisputably proved, he would no longer care to live.

CXXI.

Like the morning star which was the evening star, changed in nothing, except in place, he is the same who once appeared past comfort. There is no essential change in him. His love is there and his loneliness; and the "deep relations" of his grief are ever the same. But there is a fresh phase. All healthy and joyous impulses of morning awake in him once more, and death is swallowed up of life.

CXXII.

As the Poet has felt aforetime the soul of Arthur transfuse his own, and been rapt above the night of loss and gloom into a burst of creative energy and unfettered play of high imagination, so now again he craves that inspiring presence. Again there are strong stirrings of poetic fancy within which long to slip the thoughts of life and death, and play freely round things bright and glad and beautiful. The spirit of his friend will quicken these with joyous sympathy.

CXXIII.

Again the mysterious play of mighty cosmic forces arrests his thought. Everything in the material universe is changing, transient; all is in a state of flux, of motion, of perpetual disintegration and re-integration. But there is one thing fixed and abiding—that which we call spirit—and, amid all uncertainty, one truth is certain—that to a loving human soul a parting which shall be eternal is unthinkable.

CXXIV.

It is not by any effort of the understanding that we can apprehend God—the “Power which makes for Righteousness,” for Love, for reparation of all wrong and anguish, for fruition of all endeavour. Not the grandest, not the most cunning-devised thing in all nature can prove Him, but only the perennial need of the universal human heart. And he who cries to Him, as a child to a father, out of the depths of this unutterable, ineradicable need of Him—shall feel—although he may not see—His hands stretched out towards him.

CXXV.

Throughout his long Lament for Arthur, despite some surface bitterness, some troubled, jarring notes, the Poet’s song has been, in fact, inspired by Hope and Love alone. These were sometimes disguised, but they were ever there. Whether the strain seemed sad or sweet and strong, Love breathed it—the Love that shall sustain him to the end.

CXXVI.

Love is and was his Lord and King,—no finite sovereign—but that benign, unfathomable Power to whom he consecrates his Elegy. As yet the Poet dwells but in His earthly court. Yet even here come heavenly messengers with tidings of the friend who has reached that other court—with sweet assurances that all is well.

CXXVII.

Yes! all is well—well—not for him only, not for Arthur only, but for all mankind, for all the world. The nations

are seeking good blindly—yea, madly ; established creeds are crumbling, and thrones are tottering ; all classes of society are shaken ; the slowly-dying cause of the old *régime* is expiring amid portents of horror. But through the turmoil a deeper voice is heard that prophesies a happy end, and over all the blessed dead watch calmly, knowing all is well.

CXXVIII.

Akin to that faith (the Poet calls it love, for it is the same) that fought with Death and conquered is this faith which grapples with the temptation to despair of human progress. Too often so-called progress appears but fruitless change, and—under altered names—old errors and old follies reappear. Yet, in the main, the peoples are striving upward, and, as through a glass darkly, the Poet sees all things working together for good.

CXXIX.

Nay, these two kinds of faith are more than akin—they are identical. It is one love, one faith, which clings to Arthur and which hungers for a nobler race, a happier world. When the Poet's hopes and aspirations for his kind rise highest, then is his friend most intimately near him, and that dear image mingles with every dream of good.

CXXX.

It mingles, too, with every aspect, every feature of the visible world ; it dwells in air and sea and star and flower. Yet, because Arthur has thus become for his friend, as it were, a part of the very universe itself ; because his love for him has become a wider and a more

impersonal thing, it is not therefore less. Nay, in that he seems to him a part of God's very being, a part of God's world, he is even nearer than before, and ever dearer. With joyous exultation the Poet triumphs in the thought that throughout his life, as well as after death, they are and will be one.

CXXXI.

And now, in solemn aspiration, the Poet's prayer ascends to that Eternal Power which is over all and through all and in us all, that we may be purified ; and that, faithful to our appointed task, and strong in self-control, we may, to the end, abide in Him, believing where we cannot prove.

Fitly the Poet closes with a marriage-song. For his grief is turned to hope, his weeping into tranquil joy. Regret is dead, but love remains, and holy memories, and healthy power to work for men. In the union of a beloved sister with a dear friend, the Poet finds a bright, harmonious note on which to end his singing. For such a marriage is the very type of hope and of all things fair and bright and good, seeming to bring us nearer to the consummation for which we pray—that crowning race, that Christ that is to be. This perfected manhood towards which we strive was foreshadowed in him to whom the Poet sings—that friend who lives and loves in God for ever.

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